This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`

The measure of a man

Amelia Edith Huddleston Barr

Digitized by Google

KD3014

SHELF ~~B27 me~~

THE BOSTON-L
ORGANIZED 1792.
114, NEWBU

Added Sept. 29, 1915
To be returned in fiv
will be charged for each da
that time.

CAN
1

HARVA

1915

96 OCT 4-OCT 6-

104 [illegible] OCT 12

654 OCT 26 OCT 29

129 OCT 30 [illegible]

593 [illegible] NOV 15

20 [illegible] NOV 3

593 [illegible]

574 [illegible] 20

220 [illegible] JAN 20

580 JAN 24 [illegible]

110 FEB 10 [illegible]

396 [illegible] 13

340 [illegible] 4-

396 MAY 25 JUN 3-

590 JUN 27 JUL 3-

344 JUL 1 JUL 25

610 [illegible]

CHAS. E. LAURIAT CO.
IMPORTERS & BOOKSELLERS
385 Wash'n St. Boston

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

"Holding Bendigo's bridle, he had walked with her to the Harlow residence." [PAGE 43.]

THE BOSTON LIBRARY

Digitized by Google

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

BY

AMELIA E. BARR

AUTHOR OF "THE BOW OF ORANGE RIBBON," "PLAYING WITH FIRE," "THE WINNING OF LUCIA," ETC.

ILLUSTRATED BY
FRANK T. MERRILL

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
NEW YORK AND LONDON
1915

Digitized by Google

B27 716
KD 3614
1.22
HARVARD UNIVERSITY LIBRARY OCT 8 1941

COPYRIGHT, 1915,
BY D. APPLETON AND COMPANY

THE
BOSTON-LIBRARY
SOCIETY

Printed in the United States of America

Digitized by Google

WITH SINCERE ESTEEM

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO

MRS. ARTHUR ROBERTS

OF

EVANSTON, ILLINOIS

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

PREFACE

My Friends:

I had a purpose in writing this novel. It was to honor and magnify the sweetness and dignity of the condition of Motherhood, and of those womanly virtues and graces, which make the Home the cornerstone of the Nation. For it is not with modern Americans, as it was with the old Greek and Roman world. They put the family below the State, and the citizen absorbed the man. On the contrary, we know, that just as the Family principle is strong the heart of the Nation is sound. "Give me one domestic grace," said a famous leader of men, "and I will turn it into a hundred public virtues."

A Home, however splendidly appointed, is ill furnished without the sound of children's voices; and the patter of children's feet. It may be strictly orderly, but it is silent and forlorn; and has an air of solitude. Solitude is a great affliction, and Domestic Solitude is one of its hardest forms. No number of balls and dinner parties, no visits from friends, can make up for the absence of sons and daughters round the family table and the family hearth.

Yet there certainly is a restless feminine minority, who declare, both by precept and example, Family Life to be a servitude. Alas! They have not given themselves oppor-

Digitized by Google

tunity to discover that self-sacrifice is the meat and drink of all true affection.

But women have learned within the last two decades to listen to every side of an argument. Their Club life, with its variety of "views," has led them to decide that every phase of a question ought to be attentively considered. So I do not doubt that my story will receive justice, and I hope approval, from all the women—and men—that read it.

Affectionately to all,

AMELIA E. BARR.

Digitized by Google

CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	The Great Sea Waters	1
II.	The People of the Story	18
III.	Love Ventures in	39
IV.	Brothers	56
V.	The Hearth Fire	78
VI.	Love's Young Dream	99
VII.	Shock and Sorrow	125
VIII.	The Goddess of the Tender Feet	146
IX.	John Interferes in Harry's Affairs	182
X.	At Her Gates	204
XI.	Jane Receives a Lesson	235
XII.	Profit and Loss	262
XIII.	The Love that Never Fails	286
	Sequences	312

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

"Holding Bendigo's bridle, he had walked with her to the Harlow residence" . . . . . *Frontispiece*

FACING PAGE

"He knew her for his own . . . as she stood with her father at the gate of their little garden" 72

"He ran down the steps to meet her, and she put her hand in his" 168

"Noiselessly he stepped to her side and . . . stood in silent prayer" 232

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

THE MEASURE OF A MAN

CHAPTER I

THE GREAT SEA WATERS

Gray sky, brown waters, as a bird that flies
  My heart flits forth to these;
Back to the winter rose of Northern skies,
  Back to the Northern seas.

. . . .

The sea is His, and He made it.

I saw a man of God coming over the narrow zig-zag path that led across a Shetland peat moss. Swiftly and surely he stepped. Bottomless bogs of black peat-water were on each side of him, but he had neither fear nor hesitation. He walked like one who knew his way was ordered, and when the moss was passed, he pursued his journey over the rocky moor with the same untiring speed. Now and then he sang a few lines, and now and then he lifted his cap, and stood still to listen to the larks. For the larks sing at midnight in the Shetland summer, and to the music of their heaven-soaring songs he

Digitized by Google

set one sweet name, and in the magical radiance over land and sea had that momentary vision of a beloved face which the second-sight of Memory sometimes grants to a pure, unselfish love. Then with a joyful song nestling in his heart, he went rapidly forward. And the night was as the day, for the moon was full and the rosy spears of the Aurora were charging the zenith from every point of the horizon.

Very early he came to a little town. It was asleep and there was no sound of life in it; but a large yacht was lying at the silent pier with steam visible, and he went directly to her. During the full tide she had drifted a few feet from land, but he took the open space like a longer step, walked straight to the wheel, and softly whistled.

Then the Captain came quickly up the companion-way, and there was light and liking on his face, as he said,

"Welcome, sir! I was expecting thee."

"To be sure. I sent you word I should be here before sunrising. Are you ready to sail?"

"Quite ready, sir."

"Then cast off at once," and immediately there was movement all through the boat—the sound of setting sail, the lifting of the anchor, the rush of steam, and the hoarse melancholy voices of the sailors. Then the man laid his hand on the wheel, and with wind and tide in her favor, the yacht was soon racing down the great North Sea.

Digitized by Google

"It is Yoden's time at the wheel, sir," said the Captain. "If so be he is wanted."

"He is not wanted yet. I am going to take her as far as the Hoy—if it suits you, Captain."

"Take your will, sir. I am always well suited with it."

Now John Hatton was a cotton-spinner, but he knew the ways of a boat, and the winds and tides that would serve her, and the road southward she must take; and at his will she went, as if she was a solan flying for the rocks. When they first started, the sea-birds were dozing on their perches, waiting for the dawn, and their unwonted silence lent a stronger sense of loneliness to the gray, misty waters. But as they approached the pillars of Hoy, the wind rose and the waves swelled refulgent in the crimsoning east.

Then the man at the wheel was seen in all his great beauty—a man of lofty stature perfectly formed and full of power and grace in every movement. His head had an antique massiveness and was crowned with bright brown hair thrown backward. His forehead was wide and contemplative, his eyes large and gray and thickly fringed, lustrous but *not* piercing. His loving and vehement soul was not always at their windows, but when there, it drew or commanded all who met its gaze. His nose was long and straight, showing great refinement, and his chin unblunted by animal passions. A wonderful face, because the soul and the mind always found

Digitized by Google

their way at once and in full force to it, as well as to the gestures, the speech, and every action of the body. And this was the quality which gave to the whole man that air of distinction with which Nature autographs her noblest work.

When they reached the Hoy he left the wheel and stood in wonder and awe gazing at the sea around him. For some time it had been cloudy and unquiet, but among these great basaltic pillars and into their black measureless caves it flung itself with the rush and roar of a ten-knot tide gone mad. Yet the thundering bellow of its waves was not able to drown the aërial clamor of the millions of sea-birds that made these lonely pillars and cliffs their home. Eagles screamed from their summits. Great masses of marrots and guillemots rocked on the foam. Kittiwakes of every kind in incalculable numbers and black and brown-backed gulls by the thousands filled the air as thickly as snowflakes in a winter's storm; while from shelves and pinnacles of the cliffs, incredible numbers of gannots were diving with prodigious force and straight as an arrow, after their prey—all plunging, rising, screaming and shrieking, like some maddened human mob, the more terrible because of the ear-piercing metallic ring of their unceasing clamor.

After a long silence John Hatton turned to his Captain and said,

"Is it always like this, Captain?"

"It is often much livelier, sir. I have seen swarms

Digitized by Google

of sea-birds miles long, darkening the air with their wings. Our Great Father has many sea children, sir. Next summer—God willing!—we might sail to the Faroe Islands, and you would be among His whales, and His whale men."

"Then you have been to the Faroes?"

"More than once or twice. I used to take them on my road to Iceland. It is a wayless way there, but I know it. And the people are a happy, comfortable, pious lot; they are that! Most of them whale-hunters and whale-eaters."

"Eaters?"

"To be sure, sir. When it is fresh, a roast of whale isn't half bad. I once tried it myself."

"Once?"

"Well, then, I didn't want it twice. You know, I'm beef-bred. That makes a difference, sir. I like to go to lonely islands, and as a general thing I favor the kind of people that live on them."

"What is the difference between these lonely islanders and Yorkshire men like you and me?"

"There is a good bit of difference, in more ways than one, sir. For instance, they aren't fashionable. The women mostly dress the same, and there are no stylish shapes in the men's 'oils' and guernseys. Then they call no man 'master.' God is their employer, and from His hand they take their daily bread. And they don't set themselves up against Him, and grumble about their small wages and their long hours. And if the weather is bad, and they are kept off

Digitized by Google

a sea that no boat could live in, they don't grumble like Yorkshire men do, when warehouses are overstocked and trade nowhere, and employers hev to make shorter hours and less pay."

"What then?"

"The men smoke a few more pipes, and the women spin a few more hanks of wool. And in the long evenings there's a good bit of violin-playing and reciting, but there's no murmuring against their Great Master. And there's no drinking, or dance halls. And when the storm is over, the men untie their boats with a shout and the women gladly clean up the stour of the idle time."

"Did you ever see a Yorkshire strike?"

"To be sure I hev; I had my say at the Hatton strike, I hed that! You were at college then, and your father was managing it, so we could not take the yacht out as expected, and I run down to Hatton to hev a talk with Stephen Hatton. There was a big strike meeting that afternoon, and I went and listened to the men stating 'their grievances.' They talked a lot of nonsense, and I told them so. 'Get all you can rightly,' I said, 'but don't expect Stephen Hatton or any other cotton lord to run factories for fun. They won't do it, and you wouldn't do it yersens!' "

"Did they talk sensibly?"

"They talked foolishness and believed it, too. It was fair capping to listen to them. There was some women present, slatterns all, and I told them

Digitized by Google

to go home and red up their houses and comb up their hair, and try to look like decent cotton-spinners' wives. And when this advice was cheered, the women began to get excited, and I thought I would be safer in Hatton Hall. Women are queer creatures."

"Were you ever married, Captain?"

"Not to any woman. My ship is my wife. She's father and mother and brother and sister to me. I have no kin, and when I see how much trouble kin can give you, I don't feel lonely. The ship I sail—whatever her name—is to me 'My Lady,' and I guard and guide and cherish her all the days of her life with me."

"Why do you say 'her life,' Captain?"

"Because ships are like women—contrary and unreasonable. Like women they must be made to answer the rudder, or they go on the rocks. There are, of course, *men*-of-war, and they get men's names, and we give them fire and steel to protect themselves, but when your yacht with sails set, goes curtsying over the waves like a duchess, you know she's feminine, and you wouldn't call her after your father or yourself, but your sweetheart's name would be just suitable, I'm sure."

John smiled pleasantly, and his silence encouraged the Captain to continue. "Why, sir, the very insurance offices speak of a ship as *she,* and what's more they talk naturally of the 'life and death of a ship,' and I can tell you, sir, if you had ever seen a

Digitized by Google

ship fight for her life and go down to her death, you would say they were right. Mr. Hatton, there is no sadder sight than a ship giving up the fight, because further fight is useless. Once I was present at the death of a ship. I pray God that I may never see the like again. Her captain and her men had left her alone, and from the boats standing abaft, they silently watched her sinking. Sir, many a man dies in his bed with all his kin around, and does not carry as much love with him as she did. *Why-a!* The thought of that hour brings a pain to my heart yet—and it is thirty years ago."

"You are a true sailor, Captain."

"To be sure I am. As the Fife men say, 'I was born with the sea in my mouth.' I thank God for it! Often I have met Him on the great deep, for 'His path is on the waters.' I don't believe I would have found Him as easy and as often, in a cotton-spinning factory—no, I don't!"

"A good man like you, Captain, ought to have a wife and a home."

"I'm not sure of that, Mr. Hatton. On my ship at sea I am lord and master, and my word is law as long as I stop at sea. If any man does not like my word and way, he can leave my ship at the first land we touch, and I see that he does so. But it is different with a wife. She is in your house to stay, whether you like it or not. All you have is hers if you stick to the marriage vow. Yes, sir, she even takes your name for her own, and if she does

Digitized by Google

not behave well with it, you have to take the blame and the shame, whether you deserve it or not. It is a one-sided bargain, sir."

"Not always as bad as that, Captain."

"Why, sir, your honored father, who lorded it over every man he met and contradicted everything he didn't like, said, 'Yes, my dear,' to whatever Mrs. Hatton desired or declared. I hed to do the same thing in my way, and Mrs. Hatton on board this yacht was really her captain. I'm not saying but what she was a satisfactory substitute, for she hed the sense to always ask my advice."

"Then she acted under orders, Captain."

"To be sure. But I am Captain Lance Cook, of Whitby, a master navigator, a fourth in direct line from Captain James Cook, who sailed three times round the world, when that was a most uncommon thing to do. And every time he went, he made England a present of a few islands. Captain James Cook made his name famous among Englishmen of the sea, and I hevn't come across the woman yet I considered worthy to share it."

"You may meet her soon now, Captain. There is a 'new woman' very much the fashion these days. Perhaps you have not seen her yet."

"I have seen her, sir. I have seen all I want to see of her. She appears to hev got the idea into her head that she ought to hev been a man, and some of them have got so far in that direction that you are forced to say that in their dress and looks

Digitized by Google

there isn't much difference. However, I hev heard very knowing men declare they always found the old woman in all her glory under the new one, and I wouldn't wonder if that was the case. What do you think, Mr. Hatton?"

"It may be, Captain, that it is the 'new man' that is wanted, and not the 'new woman.' I think most men are satisfied with the old woman. I am sure I am," and his eyes filled with light, and he silently blessed the fair woman who came into his memory ere he added, "but then, I have not a great ancestor's name to consider. The Hattons never gave anything in the way of land to England."

"They hev done a deal for Yorkshire, sir."

"That was their duty, and their pleasure and profit. Yorkshire men are kinsmen everywhere. If I met one in Singapore, or Timbuctoo, I would say *'Yorkshire?'* and hold out my hand to him."

"Well, sir, I've seen Yorkshire men I wouldn't offer my hand to; I hev that, and sorry I am to say it! I never was in Singapore harbor, and I must acknowledge I never saw or heard tell of Timbuctoo harbor."

John laughed pleasantly. "Timbuctoo is in Central Africa. It was just an illustration."

"Illustration! You might have illustrated with a true harbor, sir—for instance, New York."

"You are right. I ought to have done so."

"Well, sir, it's hard to illustrate and stick to truth. There is the boatswain's whistle! I must

Digitized by Google

go and see what's up. Pentland Firth is ever restless and nobody minds that, but she gets into sudden passions which need close watching, and I wouldn't wonder if there was not now signs of a Pentland tantrum."

The Captain's supposition was correct. In a few minutes the ship was enveloped in a livid creeping mist, and he heard the Captain shout, *"All hands stand by to reef!"* Reef they did, but Pentland's temper was rapidly rising, and in a few minutes there was an impetuous shout for the storm jib, *"Quick,"* and down came a blast from the north, and with a rip and a roar the yacht leaped her full length. If her canvas had been spread, she would have gone to the bottom; but under bare masts she came quickly and beautifully to her bearings, shook herself like a gull, and sped southward.

All night they were beating about in a fierce wind and heavy sea; and Hatton, lying awake, listened to the mysterious hungering voice of the waves, till he was strangely sad and lonely. And there was no Captain to talk with, though he could hear his hoarse, strong voice above the roar of wind and waters. For the sea was rising like the gable of a house, but the yacht was in no trouble; she had held her own in far worse seas. In the morning the sky was of snaky tints of yellow and gray, but the wind had settled and the waves were flatting; but John saw bits of trailing wreckage floating about their black depths, making the Firth look savagely haggard.

Digitized by Google

On the second evening the Captain came to eat his dinner with John. "The storm is over, Mr. Hatton," he said. "The sea has been out of her wits, like an angry woman; but," he added with a smile, "we got the better of her, and the wind has gone down. There is not breeze enough now to make the yacht lie over."

"I could hear your voice, strong and cheerful, above all the uproar, Captain, so I had no fear."

"We had plenty of sea room, sir, a good boat, and——"

"A good captain."

"Yes, sir, you may say that. The Pentland roared and raged a bit, but the sea has her Master. She hears a voice we cannot hear. It says only three words, Mr. Hatton, three words we cannot hear, but a great calm follows them."

"And the three words are——?"

"Peace! Be still!"

Then John Hatton looked with a quick understanding into his Captain's face, and answered with a confident smile,

> "O Saxon Sailor thou hast had with thee,
> The Sailor of the Lake of Galilee."

"I hope, and I believe so, sir. I have been in big storms, and *felt* it."

"I got a glimpse of you in a flash of lightning that I shall never forget, Captain Cook. You were

Digitized by Google

standing by the wheel, tightening your hat on your head; your feet were firm on the rolling deck, and you were searching the thickest of the storm with a cheerful, confident face. Do you like a storm?"

"Well, sir, smooth sea-sailing is no great pleasure. I would rather see clouds of spray driving past swelling sails, than feel my way through a nasty fog. Give me a sea as high as a masthead, compact as a wall, and charging with the level swiftness of a horse regiment, and I would rather take a ship through it, than make her cut her way through a thick, black fog, as if she was a knife. In a storm you see what you are doing, and where you are going, but you hev to steal and creep and sneak through a fog, and never know what trap or hole may be ahead of you. I know the sea in all her ways and moods, sir. Some of them are rather trying. But my home and my business is on her, and in her worst temper she suits me better than any four-walled room, where I would feel like a stormy petrel shut up in a cage. The sea and I are kin. I often feel as if I had tides in my blood that flow and ebb with her tides."

"I would not gainsay you, Captain. Every man's blood runs as he feels. You were a different man and a grander man when you were guiding the yacht through the storm than you are sitting here beside me eating and drinking. My blood begins to flow quick when I go into big rooms filled with a thousand

Digitized by Google

power looms. Their noise and clatter is in my ears a song of praise, and very often the men and women who work at them are singing grandly to this accompaniment. Sometimes I join in their song, as I walk among them, for the Great Master hears as well as sees, and though these looms are almost alive in their marvelous skill, it may be that He is pleased to hear the little human note mingling with the voices of the clattering, humming, burring looms."

"To be sure He is. The song of labor is His, and I hev no doubt it is quite as sweet in His ear as the song of praise. Your song is among the looms, and mine is among the winds and waves, but they are both the same, sir. It is all right. I'm sure I'm satisfied."

"How you do love the sea, Captain!"

"To be sure, I was born on it and, please God, I hope my death may be from it and my grave in it, nearby some coast where the fisher-folk live happily around me."

There was a few moments' silence, then John Hatton asked, "Are we likely to have fine weather now?"

"Yes, sir, middling fine, until we pass Peterhead. At Aberdeen and southward it may be still finer, and you might have a grand sail along the east coast of Scotland and take a look at some of its famous towns."

This pleasant prospect was amply verified. It was

Digitized by Google

soon blue seas and white sea-birds and sunny skies, with a nice little whole-sail breeze in the right direction. But John was not lured by any of the storied towns of the east coast. "What time I can now spare I will give to Edinburgh," he said, in answer to the Captain's suggestion concerning St. Andrews, Aberdeen, Anstruther and Largo. "I am straight for Edinburgh now. I feel as if my holiday was over. I heard the clack of the looms this morning. They need me, I dare say. I suppose we can be in Leith harbor by Saturday night, Captain?"

"It may be Sunday, sir, if this wind holds. It is an east-windy west-windy coast, and between here and Edinburgh the wind doesn't know its own mind an hour at a time."

"Well, then, say Sunday. I will stay a few days in Edinburgh, and then it must be Whitby and home."

It was Sunday afternoon when the yacht was snug in Leith harbor, and the streets of Edinburgh were full of congregations returning home from the different churches. He went to an hotel on Prince Street and ordered a good dinner spread in his sitting-room. It was a large outlooking apartment, showing him in the glorious sunset the Old Town piled as by a dreamer, story over story, and at the top of this dream-like hill, the gray ancient castle with bugles and the roll of drums sounding behind its ramparts. Bridges leaped across a valley edged with gardens connecting the Old Town with

Digitized by Google

the New Town. Wherever his eyes fell, all was romance and memories of romance, a magically

> Towered, templed Metropolitan,
> Waited upon by hills,
> River, and wide-spread ocean; tinged
> By April light, or draped and fringed
> As April vapor wills.
> Hanging like some vast Cyclops' dream
> High in the shifting weather gleam.

After dinner he sat at the open window, thinking of many things, until he finally fell asleep to dream of that illuminated vault in the castle, in which glitters mysteriously the crown and scepter of the ancient kings and queens of Scotland.

Into the glamour of this vision there came suddenly a dream of his mother, and his home, and he awakened from it with an intense conviction that his mother needed his presence, and that he must make all haste to reach his home. In half an hour he had paid his bill and taken a carriage for Leith harbor, and the yacht was speeding down the Firth ere the wan, misty daylight brightened the colorless sea. The stillness of sea and sky was magical and they were a little delayed by the calm, but in due time the wind sprang up suddenly and the yacht danced into Whitby harbor.

Then John parted from Captain Cook, saying as he did so, "Good-bye, Captain. We have had a happy holiday together. Get the yacht in order

Digitized by Google

and revictualed, for in two weeks my brother Henry may join you. I believe he is for the south."

"Good-bye, sir. It has been a good time for me. You have been my teacher more than my master, and you are a rich man and I am a poor one."

"A man's a man for all that, Captain."

"Well, sir, not always. Many are not men in spite of *all that*. God be with you, sir."

"And with you, Captain." Then they clasped hands and turned away, each man where Duty called him.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER II

THE PEOPLE OF THE STORY

Slowly, steadily, to and fro,
  Swings our life in its weary way;
Now at its ebb, and now at its flow,
  And the evening and morning make up the day.

Sorrow and happiness, peace and strife,
  Fear and rejoicing its moments know;
Yet from the discords of such a life,
  The clearest music of heaven may flow.

Duty led John Hatton to take the quickest road to Hatton-in-Elmete, a small manufacturing town in a lovely district in Yorkshire. In Saxon times it was covered with immense elm forests from which it was originally called Elmete, but nearly a century ago the great family of Hatton (being much reduced by the passage of the Reform Bill and their private misfortunes) commenced cotton-spinning here, and their mills, constantly increasing in size and importance, gave to the Saxon Elmete the name of Hatton-in-Elmete.

The little village had become a town of some importance, but nearly every household in it was

Digitized by Google

connected in some way or other with the cotton mills, either as cotton masters or cotton operatives. There were necessarily a few professional men and shopkeepers, but there was street after street full of cotton mills, and the ancient manor of the lords of Hatton had become thoroughly a manufacturing locality.

But Hatton-in-Elmete was in a beautiful locality, lying on a ridge of hills rising precipitously from the river, and these hills surrounded the town as with walls and appeared to block up the way into the world beyond. The principal street lay along their base, and John Hatton rode up it at the close of the long summer day, when the mills were shut and the operatives gathered in groups about its places of interest. Every woman smiled at him, every man touched his cap, but a stranger would have noticed that not one man bared his head. Yorkshire men do not offer that courtesy to any man, for its neglect (originally the expression of strong individuality and self-respect) had become a habit as natural and spontaneous as their manner or their speech.

About a mile beyond the town, on the summit of a hill, stood Hatton Hall, and John felt a hurrying sense of home as soon as he caught a glimpse of its early sixteenth-century towers and chimneys. The road to it was all uphill, but it was flagged with immense blocks of stone and shaded by great elm-trees; at the summit a high, old-fashioned iron gate

Digitized by Google

admitted him into a delightful garden. And in this sweet place there stood one of the most ancient and picturesque homes of England.

It is here to be noticed that in the early centuries of the English nation the homes of the nobles distinctly represented local feeling and physical conditions. In the North they generally stood on hillsides apart where the winds rattled the boughs of the surrounding pines or elms and the murmur of a river could be heard from below. The hill and the trees, the wind and the river, were their usual background, with the garden and park and the great plantations of trees belting the estate around; the house itself standing on the highest land within the circle.

Such was the location and adjuncts of the ancient home of the Hattons, and John Hatton looked up at the old face of it with a conscious love and pride. The house was built of dark millstone grit in large blocks, many of them now green and mossy. The roof was of sandstone in thin slabs, and in its angles grass had taken root. In front there was a tower and tall gables, with balls and pinnacles. The principal entrance was a doorway with a Tudor arch, and a large porch resting on stone pillars. Within this porch there were seats and a table, pots of flowers, and a silver Jacobean bell. And all round the house were gables and doorways and windows, showing carvings and inscriptions wherever the ivy had not hid them.

Digitized by Google

The door stood wide open and in the porch his mother was sitting. She had a piece of old English lace in her hand, which she was carefully darning. Suddenly she heard John's footsteps and she lifted her head and listened intently. Then with a radiant face she stood upright just as John came from behind the laurel hedge into the golden rays of the setting sun, and her face was transfigured as she called in a strong, joyful voice,

"O John! John! I've been longing for you days and days. Come inside, my dear lad. Come in! I'll be bound you are hungry. What will you take? Have a cup of tea, now, John; it will be four hours before suppertime, you know."

"Very well, mother. I haven't had my tea today, and I am a bit hungry."

"Poor lad! You shall have your tea and a mouthful in a few minutes."

"I'll go to my room, mother, and wash my face and hands. I am not fit company for a dame so sweet as you are," and he lifted his right hand courteously as he passed her.

In less than half an hour there was tea and milk, cold meat and fruit before John, and his mother watched him eating with a beaming satisfaction. And when John looked into her happy face he wondered at his dream in Edinburgh, and said gratefully to himself,

"All is right with mother. Thank God for that!"

Digitized by Google

She did not talk while John was eating, but as he sat smoking in the porch afterwards, she said,

"I want to ask you where you have been all these weeks, John, but Harry isn't here, and you won't want to tell your story twice over, will you, now?"

"I would rather not, mother."

"Your father wouldn't have done it, whether he liked to or not. I don't expect you are any different to father. I didn't look for you, John, till next week."

"But you needed me and wanted me?"

"Whatever makes you say that?"

"I dreamed that you wanted me, and I came home to see."

"Was it last Sunday night?"

"Yes."

"About eleven o'clock?"

"I did not notice the time."

"Well, for sure, I was in trouble Sunday. All day long I was in trouble, and I am in a lot of trouble yet. I wanted you badly, John, and I did call you, but not aloud. It was just to myself. I wished you were here."

"Then yourself called to myself, and here I am. Whatever troubles you, mother, troubles me."

"To be sure, I know that, John. Well, then, it is your brother Harry."

A look of anxiety came into John's face and he asked in an anxious voice, "What is the matter with Harry? Is he well?"

Digitized by Google

"Quite well."

"Then what has he been doing?"

"Nay, it's something he wants to do."

"He wants to get married, I suppose?"

"Nay, I haven't heard of any foolishness of that make. I'll tell you what he wants to do—he wants to rent his share in the mill to Naylor's sons."

Then John leaped to his feet and said angrily, "Never! Never! It cannot be true, mother! I cannot believe it! Who told you?"

"Your overseer, Jonathan Greenwood, and Harry asked Greenwood to stand by him in the matter, but Jonathan wouldn't have anything to do with such business, and he advised me to send for you. He says the lad is needing looking after—in more ways than one."

"Where is Harry?"

"He went to Manchester last Saturday."

"What for, mother?"

"I don't know for certain. He said on business. You had better talk with Jonathan. I didn't like the way he spoke of Harry. He ought to remember his young master is a bit above him."

"That is the last thing Jonathan would remember, but he is a good-hearted, straight-standing man."

"Very, if you can believe in his words and ways. He came here Saturday to insinuate all kinds of 'shouldn't-be's' against Harry, and then on Sunday he was dropping his 'Amens' about the chapel so

Digitized by Google

generously I felt perfectly sure they were worth nothing."

"Well, mother, you may trust me to look after all that is wrong. Let not your heart be troubled. I will talk with Jonathan in the morning."

"Nay, I'll warrant he will be here tonight. He will have heard thou art home, and he will be sure he is wanted before anybody else."

"If he comes tonight, tell him I cannot see him until half-past nine in the morning."

"That is right—but what for?"

"Because I am much troubled and a little angry. I wish to get myself in harness before I see anyone."

"Well, you know, John, that Harry never liked the mill, but while father lived he did not dare to say so. Poor lad! He hated mill life."

"He ought at least to remember what his grandfather and father thought of Hatton Mill. Why, mother, on his twenty-first birthday, father solemnly told him the story of the mill and how it was the seal and witness between our God and our family—yet he would bring strangers into our work! I'll have no partner in it—not the best man in England! Yet Harry would share it with the Naylors, a horse-racing, betting, irreligious crowd, who have made their money in byways all their generations. Power of God! Only to think of it! Only to think of it! Harry ought to be ashamed of himself—he ought that."

Digitized by Google

"Now, John, my dear lad, I will not hear Harry blamed when he is not here to speak for himself—no, I will not! Wait till he is, and it will be fair enough then to say what you want to. I am Harry's mother, and I will see he gets fair play. I will that. It is my bounden duty to do so, and I'll do it."

"You are right, mother, we must all have fair judgment, and I will see that the brother I love so dearly gets it."

"God love thee, John."

"And, mother, keep a brave and cheerful heart. I will do all that is possible to satisfy Harry."

"I can leave him safely with God and his brother. And tomorrow I can now look after the apricot-preserving. Barker told me the fruit was all ready today, but I could not frame myself to see it properly done, but tomorrow it will be different." Then because she wanted to reward John for his patience, and knowing well what subject was close to his heart, she remarked in a casual manner,

"Mrs. Harlow was here yesterday, and she said her apricots were safely put away."

"Was Miss Harlow with her?"

"No. There was a tennis game at Lady Thirsk's. I suppose she was there."

"Have you seen her lately?"

"She took tea with me last Wednesday. What a beauty she is! Such color in her cheeks! It was like the apricots when the sun was on them. Such

Digitized by Google

shining black hair so wonderfully braided and coiled! Such sparkling, flashing black eyes! Such a tall, splendid figure! Such a rosy mouth! It seemed as if it was made for smiles and kisses."

"And she walks like a queen, mother!"

"She does that."

"And she is so bright and independent!"

"Well, John, she is. There's no denying it."

"She is finely educated and also related to the best Yorkshire families. Could I marry any better woman, mother?"

"Well, John, as a rule men don't approve of poor wives, but Miss Jane Harlow is a fortune in herself."

"Two months ago I heard that Lord Thirsk was very much in love with her. I saw him with her very often. I was very unhappy, but I could not interfere, you know, could I?"

"So you went off to sea, and left mother and Harry and your business to anybody's care. It wasn't like you, John."

"No, it was not. I wanted you, mother, a dozen times a day, and I was half-afraid to come back to you, lest I should find Miss Jane married or at least engaged."

"She is neither one nor the other, or I am much mistaken. Whatever are you afraid of? Jane Harlow is only a woman beautiful and up to date, she is not a 'goddess excellently fair' like the woman you are always singing about, not she! I'm

Digitized by Google

sure I often wonder where she got her beauty and high spirit. Her father was just a proud hanger-on to his rich relations; he lived and died fighting his wants and his debts. Her mother is very near as badly off—a poor, wuttering, little creature, always fearing and trembling for the day she never saw."

"Perhaps this poverty and dependence may make her marry Lord Thirsk. He is rich enough to get the girl he wants."

"His money would not buy Jane, if she did not like him; and she doesn't like him."

"How do you know that, mother?"

"I asked her. While we were drinking our tea, I asked her if she were going to make herself Lady Thirsk. She made fun of him. She mocked the very idea. She said he had no chin worth speaking of and no back to his head and so not a grain of *forthput* in him of any kind. 'Why, he can't play a game of tennis,' she said, 'and when he loses it he nearly cries, and what do you think, Mrs. Hatton, of a lover like that?' Those were her words, John."

"And you believe she was in earnest?"

"Yes, I do. Jane is too proud and too brave a girl to lie—unless——"

"Unless what, mother?"

"It was to her interest."

"Tell me all she said. Her words are life or death to me."

Digitized by Google

"They are nothing of the kind. Be ashamed of yourself, John Hatton."

"You are right, mother. My life and death are by the will of God, but I can say that my happiness or wretchedness is in Jane Harlow's power."

"Your happiness is in your own power. Her 'no' might be a disappointment in hours you weren't busy among your looms and cotton bales, or talking of discounts and the money market, but its echo would grow fainter every hour of your life, and then you would meet the other girl, whose 'yes' would put the 'no' forever out of your memory."

"Well, mother, you have given me hope, and I have been comforted by you 'as one whom his mother comforteth.' If the dear girl is not to be won by Thirsk's title and money, I will see what love can do."

"I'll tell you, John, what love can do"—and she went to a handsome set of hanging book shelves containing the favorite volumes of Dissent belonging to John's great-grandfather, Burnet, Taylor, Doddridge, Wesley, Milton, Watts, quaint biographies, and books of travel. From them she took a well-used copy of Taylor's "Holy Living and Dying," and opening it as one familiar with every page, said,

"Listen, John, learn what Love can do.

"Love solves where learning perplexes. Love attracts the best in every one, for it gives the best, Love redeemeth,

Digitized by Google

Love lifts up, Love enlightens, Love hath everlasting remembrance, Love advances the Soul, Love is a ransom, and the tears thereof are a prayer. Love is life. So much Love, so much Life. Oh, little Soul, if rich in Love, thou art mighty."

"My dear mother, thank you. You are best of all mothers. God bless you."

"Your father, John, was a man of few words, as you know. He copied that passage out of this very book, and he wrote after it, 'Martha Booth, I love you. If you can love me, I will be at the chapel door after tonight's service, then put your hand in mine, and I will hope to give you hand and heart and home as long as I live.' And for years he kept his word, John—he did that!"

"Father always kept his word. If he but once said a thing, no power on earth could make him unsay it. He was a handsome, well-built man."

"Well, then, what are you thinking of?"

"I was thinking that Lord Thirsk is, by the majority of women, considered handsome."

"What kind of women have that idea?"

"Why, mother, I don't exactly know. If I go into my tailor's, I am told about his elegant figure, if into my shoemaker's, I hear of his small feet, if to Baylor's glove counter, some girl fitting my number seven will smilingly inform me that Lord Thirsk wears number four. And if you see him walking or

Digitized by Google

driving, he always has some pretty woman at his side."

"What by all that? His feet are fit for nothing but dancing. He could not take thy long swinging steps for a twenty-mile walk; he couldn't take them for a dozen yards. His hands may be small enough, and white enough, and ringed enough for a lady, but he can't make a penny's worth with them. I've heard it said that if he goes to stay all night with a friend he has to take his valet with him—can't dress himself, I suppose."

"He is always dressed with the utmost nicety and in the tip-top of the fashion."

"I'll warrant him. Jane told me he wore a lace cravat at the Priestly ball, and I have no doubt that his pocket handkerchief was edged with lace. And yet she said, 'No woman there laughed at him.' "

"At any rate he has fine eyes and hair and a pleasant face."

"I wouldn't bother myself to deny it. If anyone fancies curly hair and big brown eyes and white cheeks and no chin to speak of and no feet fit to walk with and no hands to work with, it isn't Martha Hatton and it isn't Jane Harlow, I can take my affidavit on that," and the confident smile which accompanied these words was better than any sworn oath to John Hatton.

"You see, John," she continued, "I talked the man up and down with Jane, from his number four gloves to his number four shoes, and I know what

Digitized by Google

she said—what she said in her own way, mind you. For Jane's way is to pretend to like what she does not like, just to let people feel the road to her real opinions."

"I do not quite understand you, mother."

"I don't know whether I quite understand myself, and it isn't my way to explain my words—people usually know what I mean—but I will do it for once, as John Hatton is wanting it. For instance, I was talking to Jane about her lovers—I did not put you among them—and she said, 'Mrs. Hatton, there are no lovers in these days. The men that are men are no longer knights-errant. They don't fight in the tournament lists for their lady-love, nor even sing serenades under her window in the moonlight. We must look for them,' she said, 'in Manchester warehouses, or Yorkshire spinning-mills. The knights-errant are all on the stock exchange, and the poets write for *Punch*.' And I could not help laughing, and she laughed too, and her laugh was so infectious I could not get clear of it, and so poured my next cup of tea on the tea board."

"I wish I had been present."

"So do I, John. Perhaps then you would have understood the contradictious girl, as well as I did. You see, she wanted me to know that she preferred the Manchester warehouse men, and the Yorkshire spinners, and the share-tumblers of the stock exchange to knights and poets and that make of men. Now, some women would have said the words

Digitized by Google

straightforward, but not Jane. She prefers to state her likings and dislikings in riddles and leave you to find out their meaning."

"That is an uncomfortable, uncertain way."

"To be sure it is, but if you want to marry Jane Harlow, you had better take it into account. I never said she was perfect."

"If ever she is my wife, I shall teach her very gently to speak straightforward words."

"Then you have your work set, John. Whether you can do it or not, is a different thing. I don't want you to marry Jane Harlow, but as you have set your heart on her, I have resolved to make the most of her strong points and the least of her weak ones. You had better do the same."

There was silence for a few moments, then John asked, "Was that all, mother?"

"We had more to say, but it was of a personal nature—I don't think it concerns you at present."

"Nay, but it does, mother. Everything connected with Jane concerns me."

Mrs. Hatton appeared reluctant to speak, but John's anxiety was so evident, she answered, "Well, then, it was about my children."

"What about them?"

"She said she had heard her mother speak of my 'large family' and yet she had never seen any of them but Henry and yourself. She wondered if her mother had been mistaken. And I said, 'Nay, your mother told the truth, thank God!'

Digitized by Google

" 'You see,' she continued, 'I was at school until a year ago, and our families were not at all intimate.' I said, 'Not at all. Your father was a proud man, Miss Harlow, and he would not notice a cotton-spinner on terms of social equality. And Stephen Hatton thought himself as good as the best man near him. So he was. And no worse for the mill. It kept up the Hall, so it did.' She said I was right, and would I tell her about my children."

"I hope you did, mother. I do hope you did."

"Why not? I am proud of them all, living or dead—here or *there.* So I said, 'Well, Miss Harlow, John is not my firstborn. There was a lovely little girl, who went back to God before she was quite a year old. People said I ought to think it a great honor to give my first child to God, but it was a great grief to me. Soon after her death John was born, and after John came Clara Ann. She married before she was eighteen, a captain of artillery in the army, and she has ever since been with him in India, Africa, or elsewhere. Then I had Stephen, who is now a well-known Manchester warehouse man and seldom gets away from his business. Then Paul was given to me. He is a good boy, and a fine sailor. His ship is the *Ajax,* a first-class line of battleship. I see him now and then and get a letter from every port he touches. Then came Harry, who served an apprenticeship with his father, but never liked the mill; and at last, the sweetest gift of all God's gifts, twin daughters,

Digitized by Google

called Dora and Edith. They lived with us nearly eight years, and died just before their father. They were born in the same hour and died within five minutes of each other. The Lord gave them, and the Lord took them away, and blessed be the name of the Lord!' This is about what I said, John."

The conversation was interrupted here, by the entrance of a parlor-maid. She said, "Sir, Jonathan Greenwood is here to ask if you can see him this evening."

"Tell him I cannot. I will see him at the mill about half-past nine in the morning."

The girl went away, but returned immediately. "Jonathan says, sir, that will do. He wants to go to a meeting tonight, sir." Then Mrs. Hatton looked at her son, and exclaimed, "How very kind of your overseer to make your time do! Is that his usual way?"

"About it. He is a very independent fellow, and he knows no other way of talking. But father found it worth his while to put up with his free speech. Jonathan has a knowledge of manufactures and markets which enables him to protect our interests, and entitles him to speak his mind in his own way."

"I'm glad the same rule does not go in my kitchen. I have a first-class cook, but if she asked me for a holiday and I gave her two days and she said nothing but, 'That will do,' I would tell her to her face I was giving her something out of my comfort and my pocket, and not something that would

Digitized by Google

only 'do' in the place of what she wanted. I would show her my side of the question. I would that."

"For what reason?"

"I would be doing my duty."

"Well, mother, you could not match her and the bits of radicalism she would give you. Keep the peace, mother; you have not her weapons in your armory."

"I am just talking to relieve myself, John. I know better than to fratch with anyone—at least I think I do."

"Just before I went away, mother, Jonathan came to me and said, 'Sir, I hev confidence in human nature, generally speaking, but there's tricks and there's turns, and if I was you I would run no risks with them Manchester Sulbys'. Then he put the Sulby case before me, and if I had not taken his advice, I would have lost three hundred pounds. It is Jonathan's way to love God and suspect his neighbor."

"He will find it hard to do the two things at the same time, John."

"I do not understand how John works the problem, mother, but he does it at least to his own satisfaction. He has told us often in the men's weekly meeting that he is 'safe religiously, and that all his eternal interests are settled,' but I notice that he trusts no man until he has proved him honest."

"I don't believe in such Christians, John, and I hope there are not very many of the same make."

Digitized by Google

"Indeed, mother, this union of a religious profession with a sharp worldly spirit is the common character among our spinners. Jonathan has four sons, and he has brought every one of them up in the same way."

"One of the four got married last week—married a girl who will have a factory and four hundred looms for her fortune—old Aker's granddaughter, you know."

"Yes, I know. Jonathan told me about it. He looked on the girl as a good investment for *his* family, and discussed her prospects just as he would have discussed discounts or the money market."

Then John went to look after the condition of the cattle and horses on the home farm. He found all in good order, told the farmer he had done well, and made him happy with a few words of praise and appreciation. But he said little to Mrs. Hatton on the subject, for his thoughts were all close to the woman he loved. As they sat at supper he continually wondered about her—where she was, what she was doing, what company she was with, and even how she was dressed.

Mrs. Hatton did not always answer these queries satisfactorily. In fact, she was a little weary of "dear Jane," and had already praised her beyond her own judgment. So she was not always as sympathetic to this second appeal for information as she might have been.

"I'll warrant, John," she answered a little judi-

Digitized by Google

cially, "that Jane is at some of the quality houses tonight; and she'll be singing or dancing or playing bridge with one or other of that pale, rakish lot I see when I drive through the town."

"Mother!"

"Yes, John, a bad, idle, lounging lot, that don't do a day's work to pay for their living."

"They are likely gentlemen, mother, who have no work to do."

"Gentlemen! No, indeed! I will give them the first four letters of the word—no more. They are not gentlemen, but they may be *gents*. We don't expect much from *gents*, and how the women of to-day stand them beats me."

John laughed a little, but he said he was weary and would go to his room. And as he stood at Mrs. Hatton's side, telling her that he was glad to be with her again, she found herself in the mood that enabled her to say,

"John, my dear lad, you will soon marry, either Jane or some other woman. You must do it, you know, for you must have sons and daughters, that you may inherit the promise of God's blessing which is for you and *your children*. Then your family must have a home, but not in Hatton Hall—not just yet. There cannot be two mistresses in one house, can there?"

"No, but by my father's will and his oft-repeated desire, this house is your home, mother, as long as you live. I am going to build my own house on

Digitized by Google

the hill, facing the east, in front of the Ash plantation."

"You are wise. Our chimneys will smoke all the better for being a little apart."

"And you, my mother, are lady and mistress of Hatton Hall as long as you live. I will suffer no one to infringe on your rights." Then he stooped his handsome head to her lifted face and kissed it with great tenderness; and she turned away with tears in her eyes, but a happy smile on her lips. And John was glad that this question had been raised and settled, so quickly, and so lovingly.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER III

LOVE VENTURES IN

> Man's life is all a mist, and in the dark
> Our fortunes meet us.

John had been thinking about building his own home for some time and he resolved to begin it at once. Yet this ancient Hatton Hall, with its large, low rooms, its latticed windows and beautifully carved and polished oak panelings, was very dear to him. Every room was full of stories of Cavaliers and Puritans. The early followers of George Fox had there found secret shelter and hospitality. John Wesley had preached in its great dining-room, and Charles Wesley filled all its spaces and corridors with the lyrical cry of his wonderful hymns. There were harmless ghosts in its silent chambers, or walking in the pale moonlight up the stairs or about the flower garden. No one was afraid of them; they only gave a tender and romantic character to the surroundings. If Mrs. Hatton felt them in a room, she curtsied and softly withdrew, and John, on more than one occasion, had asked, "Why depart, dear ghosts? There is room enough for us all in the old house."

Digitized by Google

But for all this, and all that, it did not answer the spirit of John's nature and daily life. He was essentially a man of his century. He loved large proportions and abundance of light and fresh air, and he dreamed of a home of palatial dimensions with white Ionic pillars and wide balconies and large rooms made sunny by windows tall enough for men of his stature to use as doors if they so desired. It was to be white as snow, with the Ash plantation behind it and gardens all around and the river washing their outskirts and telling him as he sat in the evenings—with Jane at his side—where it had come from and what it had seen and heard during the day.

He went to sleep in this visionary house and did not awaken until the sun was high up and hurrying men and women to work. So he rose quickly, for he counted himself among this working-class, felt his responsibilities, and began to reckon with the difficulties he had to meet and the appointments he could not decline. He had promised to see his overseer at half-past nine, and he knew Jonathan would have a few disagreeable words ready, if he broke his promise—words it was better to avoid than to notice or discount.

At half-past eight he was ready to ride to the mill. His gig was waiting, but he chose his saddle horse, because the creature so lovingly neighed and neighed to the sound of his approaching footsteps, evidently rejoicing to see him, and pawing the

Digitized by Google

ground with his impatience to feel him in the saddle. John could not resist the invitation. He sent the uncaring gig away, laid his arm across Bendigo's neck, and his cheek against Bendigo's cheek. Then he whispered a few words in his ear and leaped into the saddle as only a Yorkshireman or a gypsy can leap, and Bendigo, thrilling with delight, carried his master swiftly away from the gig and its driver, neighing with triumph as he passed them.

When about halfway to the mill he met Miss Harlow returning home from her early morning walk. She was dressed with extreme simplicity in a short frock of pink corduroy, and a sailor hat of coarse Dunstable straw, with a pink ribbon round it. Long, soft, white leather gauntlets covered her hands, and she carried in them a little basket of straw, full of bluebells and ferns. John saw her approaching and he noticed the lift of her head and the lift of her foot and said to himself, "Proud! Proud!" but in his heart he thought no harm of her stately, graceful carriage. To him she was a most beautiful girl, fresh and fair and,

> —graceful as the mountain doe,
> That sniffs the forest air,
> Bringing the smell of the heather bell,
> In the tresses of her hair.

They met, they clasped hands, they looked into each other's eyes, and something sweet and subtle

Digitized by Google

passed between them. "I am so glad, so glad to see you," said John, and Miss Harlow said the same words, and then added, "Where have you been? I have missed you so much."

"And, Oh, how happy I am to hear that you have missed me! I have been away to the North—on the road to Iceland. May I call on you this evening, and tell you about my journey?"

"Yes, indeed! If you will pleasure me so far, I will send an excuse to Lady Thirsk, and stay at home to listen to you."

"That would be a miraculous favor. May I come early?"

"We dine early. Come and take your dinner with us. Mother will be glad to see you and to hear your adventures, and mother's pleasure is my greatest happiness."

"Then I will come."

As he spoke, he took out his watch and looked at it. "I have an engagement in ten minutes," he said. "Will you excuse me now?"

"I will. I wish I had an engagement. Poor women! They have bare lives. I would like to go to business. I would like to make money. There are days in which I feel that I could run a thousand spindles or manage a department store very well and very happily."

"Why do you talk of things impossible? Good-bye!"

"Until seven o'clock?"

Digitized by Google

"Until seven."

He had dismounted to speak to her and, holding Bendigo's bridle, had walked with her to the Harlow residence. He now said, "Good-bye," and the light of a true, passionate lover was on his face, as he leaped into the saddle. She watched him out of sight and then went into her home, and with an inscrutable smile, began to arrange the ferns and bluebells in a vase of cream-colored wedgewood.

In the meantime John had reached the Hatton mill, and after his long absence he looked up at it with conscious pride. It was built of brick; it was ten stories high; every story was full of windows, every story airy as a bird-cage. Certainly it was not a thing of architectural beauty, but it was a grandly organized machine where brains and hands, iron and steel worked together for a common end. As John entered its big iron gates, he saw bales of cotton going into the mill by one door, and he knew the other door at which they would come out in the form of woven calico. In rapid thought he followed them to the upper floors, and then traveled down with them to the great weaving-rooms in the order their processes advanced them. He knew that on the highest floor a devil would tear the fiber asunder, that it would then go to the scutcher, and have the dust and dirt blown away, then that carding machines would lay all the fibers parallel, that drawing machines would group them into slender ribbons, and a roving machine twist them into a soft cord,

Digitized by Google

and then that a mule or a throstle would spin the roving into yarn, and the yarn would go to the weaving-rooms, where a thousand wonderful machines would turn them into miles and miles of calico; the machines doing all the hard work, while women and girls adjusted and supplied them with the material.

It was to the great weaving-room John went first. As soon as he stood in the open door he was seen and in a moment, as if by magic, the looms were silenced, and the women and girls were on their feet, looking at him with eager, pleasant faces. John lifted his hat and said good morning and a shout of welcome greeted him. Then at some signal the looms resumed their noisy work and the women lifted the chorus from some opera which they had been singing at John's entrance, and "t' master's visit" was over.

He went next to his office, and Jonathan brought his daybook and described, in particular detail, the commercial occurrences which had made the mills' history during his absence. Not all of them were satisfactory, and John passed nothing by as trivial. Where interferences had been made with his usual known methods, he rebuked and revoked them; and in one case where Jonathan had disobeyed his order he insisted on an apology to the person injured by the transaction.

"I told Clough," he said, "that he should have what credit would put him straight. You, Jonathan,

Digitized by Google

have been discounting and cutting him down on yarns. You had no authority to do this. I don't like it. It cannot be."

"Well, sir, I was looking out for you. Clough will never straight himself. Yarns are yarns, and yarns are up in the market; we can use all we hev ourselves. Clough hes opinions not worth a shilling's credit. They are all wrong, sir."

"His opinions may be wrong, his life is right."

"Why, sir, he's nothing but a Radical or a Socialist."

"Jonathan, I don't bring politics into business."

"You're right, sir. When I see any of our customers bothering with politics, I begin to watch for their names in t' bankruptcy list. Your honorable father, sir, could talk with both Tories and Radicals and fall out with neither. Then he would pick up his order-book, and forget what side he'd taken or whether he hed been on any side or not."

"Write to Clough and tell him you were sorry not to fill his last order. Say that we have now plenty of yarns and will be glad to let him have whatever he wants."

"Very well, sir. If he fails——"

"It may be your fault, Jonathan. The yarns given him when needed, might have helped him. Tomorrow they may be too late."

"I don't look at things in that way, sir."

"Jonathan, how do you look at the Naylors' proposal?"

Digitized by Google

"As downright impudence. They hev the money to buy most things they want, but they hevn't the money among them all to buy a share in your grand old name and your well-known honorable business. I told Mr. Henry that."

"However did the Naylors get at Mr. Henry?"

"Through horses, sir. Mr. Henry loves horses, and he hes an idea that he knows all about them. I heard Fred Naylor had sold him two racers. He didn't sell them for nothing—you may be sure of that."

"Do you know what Mr. Henry paid for them, Jonathan?"

"Not I, sir. But I do know Fred Naylor; he never did a honest day's work. He is nothing but a betting book in breeches. He bets on everything, from his wife to the weather. I often heard your father say that betting is the argument of a fool —and Jonathan Greenwood is of the same opinion."

"Have you any particular dislike to the Naylors?"

"I dislike to see Mr. Henry evening himself with such a bad lot; every one of them is as worthless as a canceled postage stamp."

"They are rich, I hear."

"To be sure they are. I think no better of them for that. All they hev has come over the devil's back. I hev taken the measure of them three lads, and I know them to be three poor creatures. Mr.

Digitized by Google

Henry Hatton ought not to be counted with such a crowd."

"You are right, Jonathan. In this case, I am obliged to you for your interference. I think this is all we need to discuss at this time."

"Nay, but it isn't. I'm sorry to say, there is that little lass o' Lugur's. You must interfere there, and you can't do it too soon."

"Lugur? Who is Lugur? I never heard of the man. He is not in the Hatton factory, that I know."

"He isn't in anybody's factory. He is head teacher in the Methodist school here."

"Well, what of that?"

"He has a daughter, a little lass about eighteen years old."

"And she is pretty, I suppose?"

"There's none to equal her in this part of England. She's as sweet as a flower."

"And her father is——"

"Hard as Pharaoh. She's the light o' his eyes, and the breath o' his nostrils. So she ought to be. Her mother died when she was two years old, and Ralph Lugur hes been mother and father both to her. He took her with him wherever he went except into the pulpit."

"The pulpit? What do you mean?"

"He was a Methodist preacher, but he left the pulpit and went into the schoolroom. The Conference was glad he did so, for he was little in the way of preaching but he's a great scholar, and I

Digitized by Google

should say he hesn't his equal as a teacher in all England. He has the boys and girls of Hatton at a word. Sir, you'll allow that I am no coward, but I wouldn't touch the hem of Lucy Lugur's skirt, if it wasn't in respect and honor, for a goodish bit o' brass. No, I wouldn't!"

"What would you fear?"

"*Why-a!* I don't think he'd stop at anything decent. It is only ten days since he halted Lord Thirsk in t' High Street of Hatton, and then told him flat if he sent any more notes and flowers to Miss Lugur, 'Miss,' mind you, he would thrash him to within an inch of his life."

"What did Lord Thirsk say?"

"Why, the little man was frightened at first—and no wonder, for Lugur is big as Saul and as strong as Samson—but he kept his head and told Lugur he would 'take no orders from him.' Furthermore, he said he would show his 'admiration of Miss Lugur's beauty, whenever he felt disposed to do so.' It was the noon hour and a crowd was in the street, and they gathered round—for our lads smell a fight—and they cheered the little lord for his plucky words, and he rode away while they were cheering and left Lugur standing so black and surly that no one cared to pass an opinion he could hear. Indeed, my eldest daughter kept her little lad from school that afternoon. She said someone was bound to suffer for Lugur's setdown and it wasn't going to be her John Henry."

Digitized by Google

"He seems to be an ill-tempered man—this Lugur, and we don't want such men in Hatton."

"Well, sir, we breed our own tempers in Hatton, and we can frame to put up with them—*but strangers!*" and Jonathan appeared to have no words to express his suspicion of strangers.

"If Lugur is quarrelsome he must leave Hatton. I will not give him house room."

"You hev a good deal of influence, sir, but you can't move Lugur. No, you can't. Lugur hes been appointed by the Methodist Church, and there is the Conference behind the church, sir. I hev no doubt but what we shall hev to put up with the sulky beggar whether we want it or like it or not."

"It would be a queer thing, Jonathan Greenwood, if John Hatton did not have influence enough to put a troubler of Hatton town out of it. The Methodist Church is too sensible to oppose what is good for a community."

"Sir, you are reckoning your bill without your host. The church would likely stand by you, but all the women would stand by Lugur. And what is queerer still, all his scholars would fight anyone who said a word against him. He hes a way, sir, a way of his own with children, and I hev wondered often what is the secret of it."

"What do you mean?"

"I'll give you an example, sir. You know Silas Bolton hes a very bad lad, but the other day he went to Lugur and confessed he had stripped old Pad-

Digitized by Google

get's apple-tree. Well, Lugur listened to him and talked to him and then lifted his leather strap and gave him a dozen good licks. The lad never whimpered, and t' master shook hands with him when the bit o' business was over and said, 'You are a brave boy, Will Bolton. I don't think you'll do a mean, cowardly act like that again, and if such is your determination, you can learn me double lessons for tomorrow; then all will be square between you and me'—and Bolton's bad boy did it."

"That was right enough."

"I hevn't quite finished, sir. In two days he went with the boy to tell old Padget he was sorry, and the man forgave him without one hard word; but I hev heard since, that t' master paid for the apples out of his own pocket, and I would not wonder if he did. What do you think of the man now?"

"I think a man like that is very much of a man. I shall make it my business to know him. But what has my brother to do with either Mister or Miss Lugur?"

"Mr. Henry hes been doing just what Lord Thirsk did; he has been sending Lucy Lugur flowers and for anything I know, letters. At any rate I saw them together in Mr. Henry's phaeton on the Lancashire road at ten o'clock in the morning. I was going to Shillingworth's factory, and I stayed there an hour, and as I came back to Hatton, Mr. Henry was just leaving her at Lugur's house door."

Digitized by Google

"Where do they live?"

"In Byle's cottage at the top of the Brow."

"That was quite out of your way, Jonathan."

"I know it was. I took that road on purpose. I guessed the little woman was out with Mr. Henry, because she knew between ten and eleven o'clock her father was safe in t' schoolroom. Well, I saw Mr. Henry leave her at her own door, and though I doan't believe one-half that I hear, I can trust my own eyes even if I hevn't my spectacles on. And I doan't bother my head about other men's daughters and sweethearts, but Mr. Henry is a bit different. I loved and served his father. I love and serve his brother, and t' young man himself is very easy to love."

John was silent, and Jonathan continued, "I knew I was interfering, but——"

"You were doing your duty. I would thank you for it, but a man that serves Duty gets his wages in the service—and is satisfied."

Jonathan only nodded his head in assent, but there was the pleasant light of accepted favor on his face and he really felt much relieved when John added, "I will have a talk with my brother when he comes home about the Naylors and Miss Lugur. You can dismiss the subject from your mind. I'm sure you have plenty to worry you with the mill and its workers."

"I hev, sir, that I hev, and all the more because Lucius Yorke hes been here while you were away

Digitized by Google

and he left a promise with the lads and lassies to come again and give you a bit of his mind when you hed finished your laking and larking and could at least frame yourself to watch the men and women working for you. Yorke is a sly one—you ought to watch him."

John smiled, dropped his eyes, and began to turn his paper-knife about. "Well, Jonathan," he answered, "when Yorke comes, tell him John Hatton will be pleased to know his mind. I do not think, Jonathan, that he knows it himself, for I have noticed that he has turned his back on his own words several times since he gave me his mind a year ago."

"Well, sir, a man's mind can grow, just as his body grows."

"I know that—but it can grow in a wrong direction as easily as in a right one. Now I must attend to my secretary; he sent me word that there was a large mail waiting."

"I'll warrant it. Mr. Henry hesn't been near the mill since Friday morning," and with these words the overseer lifted his books and records and left the room.

John sat very still with bent head; he shut his eyes and turned them on his heart, but it was not long before his thoughtful face was brightened by a smile as he whispered to himself, "I must hear what Harry has to say before I judge him. Jonathan has strong prejudices, and Harry must have

Digitized by Google

what he considers 'reasonable cause' for what he wishes."

He waited anxiously all morning, going frequently to his brother's office, but it was mid-afternoon when he heard Harry's quick light step on the corridor. His heart beat to the sound, he quickly opened his door, and as he did so, Harry cried,

"John! I am so glad you are here!"

Then John drew the bright handsome lad to his side, and they entered his office together, and as soon as they were alone, John bent to his brother, drew him closer, and kissed him.

"I have been restless and longing to see you, Harry. Where have you been, dear lad?"

It was noticeable that John's tone and attitude was that of a father, more than a brother, for John was ten years older than Harry and through all his boyhood, his youth, and even his manhood he had fought for and watched over and loved him with a fatherly, as well as a brotherly, love. After their father's death, John, as eldest son, took the place and assumed the authority of their father and was by right of birth head of the household and master of the mill.

Hitherto John's authority had been so kind and so thoughtful that Harry had never dreamed of opposing it, yet the brothers were both conscious this afternoon that the old attitude towards each other had suffered a change. Harry showed it first in his dress, which was extravagant and very unlike the

Digitized by Google

respectable tweed or broadcloth common to the manufacturers of the locality. Harry's garb was that of a finished horseman. It was mostly of leather of various colors and grades, from the highly dressed Spanish leather of his long, black boots to the soft, white, leather gauntlets, which nearly covered his arms. He had a leather jockey cap on his head, and a leather whip in his hand, and he gave John a long, loving look, which seemed to ask for his admiration and deprecate, if not dispute, his expected dislike.

For John's looks traveled down the handsome figure, whose hand he still clasped, with evident dismay and dissatisfaction, and Harry retaliated by striking his booted leg with his riding-whip. For an instant they stood thus looking at each other, both of them quite aware of the remarkable contrast they made. Harry's tall, slight form, black hair, and large brown eyes were a vivid antithesis to John's blond blue-eyed strength and comeliness. To her youngest son, Mrs. Hatton, who was a daughter of the Norman house of D'Artoe, had transmitted her quick temperament, her dark beauty, and her elastic grace of movement.

Harry's beauty had a certain local fame; when people spoke of him it was not of Henry Hatton they spoke, they called him "t' young master," or more likely, "that handsome lad o' Hattons." He was more popular and better loved than John, because his temper and his position permitted him a

Digitized by Google

greater familiarity with the hands. They came to John for any solid favor or any necessary information, they came to Harry for help in their ball or cricket games or in any musical entertainment they wished to give. And Harry on such occasions was their fellow playmate, and took and gave with a pleasant familiarity that was never imposed on.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IV

BROTHERS

The pleasant habit of existence, the sweet fable of Life and Love.

. . . . .

They sin who tell us Love can die,
With Life all other passions fly,
Love is indestructible.

. . . . .

A mother is a mother still, the holiest thing alive.

This afternoon the brothers looked at each other with great love, but there was in it a sense of wariness; and Harry was inclined to bluff what he knew his brother would regard with inconvenient seriousness.

"Will you sit, Harry? Or are you going at once to mother? She is a bit anxious about you."

"I will sit with you half an hour, John. I want to talk with you. I am very unhappy."

"Nay, nay! You don't look unhappy, I'm sure; and you have no need to feel so."

"Indeed, I have. If a man hates his lifework, he is very likely to hate his life. You know, John, that I have always hated mills. The sight of their long chimneys and of the human beings groveling at the

Digitized by Google

bottom of them for their daily bread gives me a heartache. And the smell of them! O John, the smell of a mill sickens me!"

"What do you mean, Harry Hatton?"

"I mean the smell of the vaporous rooms, and the boiling soapsuds, and the oil and cotton and the moisture from the hot flesh of a thousand men and women makes the best mill in England a sweating-house of this age of corruption."

"Harry, who did you hear speak of cotton mills in that foolish way? Some ranter at a street corner, I suppose. Hatton mill brings you in good, honest money. I think little of feelings that slander honest work and honest earnings."

"John, my dear brother, you must listen to me. I want to get out of this business, and Eli Naylor and Thomas Henry Naylor will rent my share of the mill."

"Will they? No! Not for all the gold in England! What are you asking me, Harry Hatton? Do you think I will shame the good name of Hatton by associating it with scoundrels and blacklegs? Your father kicked Hezekiah Naylor out of this mill twenty years ago. Do you think I will take in his sons, and let them share our father's good name, and the profits of the wonderful business he built up? I say *no!* A downright, upright *no!* Why, Harry, you must be off your head to think of such a thing as possible. It is enough to make father come back from the grave."

Digitized by Google

"You are talking nonsense, John. If father is in heaven, he wouldn't come back here about an old mill full of weariness and hatred and wretched lives; and if he isn't in heaven, he wouldn't be let come back. I am not afraid of father now."

"If you must sell or rent your share, I will make shift to buy or lease it. Then what do you mean to do?"

"Mr. Fred Naylor is going to coach me for horse-racing. You know I love horses, and Naylor says they will make me more money than I can count."

"Don't you tell me anything the Naylors say. I won't listen to it. Horse-racing is gambling. You don't come from gamblers. You will be a fool among them and every kind of odds will be against you."

"And I shall make money fast and pleasantly."

"Supposing you do make money fast, you will spend it still faster. That is the truth."

"Horse-racing is a manly amusement. No one can deny that, John."

"But, Harry, you did not come into this world to *amuse* yourself. You came to do the work God Almighty laid out for you to do. It wasn't horse-racing."

"I know what I am talking about, John."

"Not you. You are cheating and deceiving yourself, and any sin is easy, after that sin."

"I have told you already what I thought of mill work."

Digitized by Google

"You have not thought right of it. We have nearly eight hundred workers; half of them are yours. It is your duty to see that these men and women have work and wage in Hatton mill."

"I will not do it, John."

"You are not going to horse-racing. I want you to understand that, once and for all. Have no more to do with any of the Naylors. Drop them forever."

"I can not, John. I will not."

"Rule your speech, Henry Hatton. John Hatton is not saying today what he will unsay tomorrow. You are not going to horse-racing and horse-trading. Most men who do so go to the dogs next. People would wonder far and wide. You must choose a respectable life. I know that the love of horses runs through every Yorkshireman's heart. I love them myself. I love them too well to bet on them. My horse is my fellow-creature, and my friend. Would you bet on your friend, and run him blind for a hundred or two?"

"Naylor has made thousands of pounds."

"I don't care if he has made millions. All money made without labor or without equivalent is got over the devil's back to be squandered in some devil's pastime. Harry, bettors infer dupes. When you have to pay a jockey a small fortune to do his duty, he may be an honest man—but there are inferences. Can't you think of something better to do?"

Digitized by Google

"I wanted to be an artist and father would not let me. I wanted to have my voice trained and father laughed at me. I wanted to join the army and father was angry and asked me if I did not want to be a pugilist. He would not hear of anything but the mill. John, I won't go to the mill again. I won't be a cotton-spinner, and I'll be glad if you will buy me out at any price."

"I won't do that—not yet. I'll tell you what I will do. I will rent your share of the mill for a year if you will take Captain Cook and the yacht and go to the Mediterranean, and from the yacht visit the old cities and see all the fine picture galleries, and listen to the music of Paris and Milan or even Vienna. You must stay away a year. I want you to realize above all things that to live to *amuse* yourself is the hardest work the devil can set you to do."

"I promised Fred Naylor I would rent him my share."

"How dared you make such a promise? Did you think that I, standing as I do, for my father, Stephen Hatton, would ever lower the Hatton name to Hatton and Naylor? I am ashamed of you, Harry! I am that!"

"John, I am so unhappy in the mill. You don't understand——"

"Your duty is in the mill. If a man does his duty, he cannot be unhappy. No, he can not."

"I have been doing my duty five years, and hating

Digitized by Google

every hour of it. And I promised the Naylor boys——"

"What?"

"That I would sell or rent my share in this mill to them."

"It is impossible for you to keep that promise. You cannot sell a shilling's worth belonging to the mill property without mine and mother's permission. Neither of us will give it. Your plan won't work, Harry. Mother and I will stand by Hatton mill as firm as an anvil beaten upon. Both of us will do anything we can to make you reasonably happy, but you must never dare to name selling or renting your right to anyone but your brother. The mill is ours! No stranger shall own a bobbin in it! One or both of us will run it until we follow our father, and then——"

"Then what?"

"Our sons will take our place if so it pleases God. Harry, dear, dear lad, go and take a long holiday among the things you love, and after it we will come to a kind and sensible conclusion about your future. While you are away, I will do your work for you and you shall have your full share of whatever money is made. Stay a year if you wish, but try and find yourself before you come home."

"I would like to do as you say, John, but a year is a long time to be away from the girl you love. I should want her every hour and should be utterly miserable without her."

Digitized by Google

John was silent and troubled. Harry looked entreatingly at him, and it was hard to resist the pleading in the young man's eyes. Finally John asked a little coldly,

"Do you want to get married?"

"Not just yet—if I can get mother to go with me."

"To the Mediterranean?"

"Certainly."

"Who is the girl?"

"Miss Lugur, the schoolmaster's daughter."

"Mother would not go. You could not expect it. I also should be much against her spending a year away from home. Oh, you know it is out of the question!"

"I think mother will go. I shall ask her."

"I wonder how you can find it in your heart to ask such a thing of her!"

"Lucy Lugur, poor little girl, has no mother."

"You cannot expect Mrs. Stephen Hatton to mother her."

"Yes, I do. Mother has often told me she would do anything in the world for me. I am going to ask her to go with me, then I can take Lucy."

"Harry, you must not put her love in such a hard strait. Do be reasonable."

"I cannot be reasonable about Lucy Lugur. I love her, John; she is the most beautiful woman in the world."

"All right, I do not contradict you; but is that

Digitized by Google

any reason for sacrificing mother's comfort to her beauty?"

"Mother likes to give up to me. If I ask her to go, she will go. I do not forget, John, what you have promised; no indeed, and I am sure mother will be quite as kind. I will now go and ask her."

When he arrived at the Hall gate, he had a sudden sense of the injustice of his intention, but the thought of Lucy Lugur put it down; and he heralded his arrival by a long, sweet whistle, whose music penetrated the distance and informed Mrs. Hatton of her son's approach. She was drinking her afternoon cup of tea to angry thoughts of him, telling herself that he ought to have been home on the previous day, that at least he ought to have sent her a few lines when delayed. So troubled was she by these reflections and others rising from them that she had forgotten to put sugar in her tea, and was eating wheat bread when her favorite thin slices of rye loaf were at her hand. The prodigious inquietude of motherhood had her in its grip, and she had just begun to tell herself that poor Harry might be sick in an hotel with no one to look after him when her reverie of love and fear was dispelled in a moment by the cheerful sound of Harry's whistle.

The next moment she was on the porch to welcome him. If his delay was wrong, she had quite forgotten the wrong; there was nothing in her heart but mother love, running over and expressing itself in her beaming eyes, her smiling face, her out-

Digitized by Google

stretched hands, and her joyful words. She kissed him fondly and between laughing and crying led him into the house and straight to her little tea-table.

"There is room enough for you, my dear, dear lad! Where have you been this ever so long?" she asked. "I was looking for you last Saturday night —and John is home again, thank God, and——"

"I know John is home, mother. I was at the mill. My horse met me at Oxbar Station, and as I was riding, I called at the mill to look at my mail, and so finding John there, I stopped and had a chat with him."

"I am glad of that. What did he say to thee? He was feeling very bad, I know, about the Naylor boys. I wonder what makes thee even thyself with that low set. Thy father will be angry, if he knows, and Greenwood thinks he is sure to know if Naylors are meddling in his family or his affairs. Greenwood speaks very badly of the whole crowd—living and dead."

"Well, mother, you know none of the Naylors are Methodists; that sets them down with Greenwood. The Naylors are all right. Fred Naylor has been very kind to me."

"Did you speak to John about them?"

"Greenwood had already spoken and John was angry and got into a passion at a simple business proposal they made."

"John was right, he was that. I was in a pas-

Digitized by Google

sion myself, when I heard of their proposal—downright impudence, I call it."

"Nay, mother. They offered good money for what they asked. There was no impudence in that. It was just business."

"Naylors have no good money, not they. The kind they do have would blacken and burn Hatton's hands to touch. Thy father ran the whole kith and kit of the Naylors out of Hatton village the very year of thy birth. He wouldn't have them in his village if he was alive and while I am lady of Hatton Manor they are not coming back here. I will see to that."

"There is a new generation of Naylors now, and——"

"They are as bad and very likely worse than all before them. Families that don't grow better grow worse. Greenwood says they are worse; but I'm not standing on what he says. Thy father despised them, that is a fact I can rely on and work from."

"Father is dead, and he——"

"Not he! He is living, and more alive than he ever was. He comes to me often."

"When you are asleep, I suppose."

"You suppose right. But, Harry, can you tell me what passes in that state of sleep when I or you or any other sleeper is shut up from every human eye; when all the doors of the body are closed, and all the windows darkened? Speak, my lad, of what you know something about, but dreaming is a mys-

Digitized by Google

tery to far wiser men than you are, or are likely to be—unless Wisdom should visit you while you are dreaming."

"Well, mother, I am going away for a year, and during that time I shall forget the Naylors and they will forget me."

"Whatever are you talking about, Harry Hatton? I will not hear of you going on such a journey—no matter where to, so now you know."

"It is John's advice."

"It is very poor advice. For steady living in, there is no place like Yorkshire."

"I was telling John today what I have often told you, how I hated the mill, how sick it made me, and that I must sell my interest in it in order to do something else. Then John made me a proposal, and if you think well of it I will do as John advises. But let us go to the porch, it is so hot here. It feels like the dog days."

"No wonder, with the toggery you have on your back. Whatever in the world led you to make such a guy of yourself? I hope you didn't come through the village."

"I did. I had my horse brought to Oxbar Station, for that very purpose."

"Well, I never! Do you think you look handsome in those things?"

"I do."

"You never made a bigger mistake. I can tell you that. But I want to know what John is up to—

Digitized by Google

sending you away for a whole year—such nonsense!"

Then Harry made John's proposal as attractive as he could, and Mrs. Hatton listened with a face devoid of all expression, until he said: "I want you with me, mother. I shall have no pleasure without you."

"There is something else you want, Harry. What is it?"

"Well, mother, there is a beautiful girl whom I love with all my heart and soul. I want to take her with me, but I can not—unless you also go."

Mrs. Hatton's face flushed, and she dropped her eyes, knowing that they were full of anger. "Who is this girl?" she asked coldly.

"Lucy Lugur, the schoolmaster's daughter."

"Could you not take her own mother?"

"Lucy has no mother. Her father has been father and mother both to her since she was two years old. He loves her beyond everything."

"I can believe that. I know a little of Ralph Lugur. He has been to see me twice about the children of the village."

"He has them all at his beck and call. And Lucy, mother, she is so fair and sweet! If you could only see her!"

"I have seen her."

"Oh, mother dear, don't speak unkindly of her!"

"Nay; why should I? She is, as you say, very pretty; and I'll warrant she is as good as she is

Digitized by Google

pretty. I could trust Lugur to bring her up properly—but she is not a mate for you."

"I will have no other mate."

"Miss Lugur may be all your fancy paints her, but why should your mother be asked to leave her home, her duties, and pleasures for a year? To subject herself to bad weather and sickness and loneliness and fatigue of all kinds in order that she may throw the mantle of her social respectability over an equivocal situation. I do not blame the girl, but I feel more keenly and bitterly than I can tell you the humiliation and discomfort you would gladly put upon me in order to give yourself the satisfaction of Miss Lugur's company. Harry, you are the most selfish creature I ever met. John has promised to give up your rightful assistance in the mill, to really do your work for a year, your income is to be paid in full, though you won't earn a farthing of it; you expect the use of the yacht for yourself and a girl out of my knowledge and beneath my social status. Oh, Harry! Harry! It is too much to ask of any mother."

"I never thought of it in this way. Forgive me, mother."

"And who is to take care of John if I go with you? Who is to care for the old home and all the treasures gathered in it? Who will look after the farm and the horses and cattle and poultry, the fruit-trees and lawns and flowers as I do? Do you think that all these cares are pleasures to me? No,

Digitized by Google

my dear lad, but they are my duty. I wouldn't have thy father find out that I neglected even a brooding hen. No, I wouldn't. And the yacht was thy father's great pleasuring. I only went with him to double that pleasure. I don't like the sea, though I never let him know it. Oh, my dear! But there! You haven't learned yet that self-sacrifice is love, and no love without it."

"Mother, I am ashamed of my selfishness. I never realized before how many things you have to care for."

"From cocklight to the dim, Harry, there is always something needing my care. Must house and farm and John and all our dumb fellow creatures go to the mischief for pretty Lucy Lugur? My dear, I'm saying these things to you, because nobody else has a right to say them; but oh, Harry, it breaks my heart to say them!"

"Mother, forgive me. I did not think of anything but the fact that you have always stood by me through thick and thin."

"In all things right, I will stand by you. In whatever is wrong I will be against you. You have fallen into the net of bad company, and you can't mend that trouble—you can only run away from it. Take John's advice, and get out of the reach of that Naylor influence."

"I never saw anything wrong with Frank Naylor. He did not drink, he never touched a card, and he was always respectful to the women we met."

Digitized by Google

"Harry, you would not dare to repeat to me all that Frank Naylor *said* to you. Oh, my dear, there it is! When you can shut your *ears,* as easily as your *eyes,* you can afford to be less particular about the company you keep—not until."

At this moment John entered, and the conversation became general and impersonal. But the influence of uncertain and unlooked-for anxiety was over all, and Harry was eager to escape it. He said the young men would be expecting him at their association hall, as he had promised to explain to them the mysteries of golf, which he wished them to favor above cricket.

He had, indeed, a promised obligation on this subject, but the exact time was as yet within his own decision. Yet he was ready to fulfill it that evening, rather than listen to the conversation about himself and his future, which he knew would ensue whether he was present or not. And the promise John had given him of a year's holiday was so satisfactory that he longed to be alone and at liberty to follow it out and fit it into his life.

He felt that John had been generous to him, but he also felt that the proposed manner of rest and recreation was in one respect altogether unsatisfactory—he was to be sent away from Lucy Lugur. He was sure that was John's real and ultimate motive, whatever other motive was virtually put in its place. Mother and brother would agree on that point and he thought of this agreement with a dis-

Digitized by Google

content that rapidly became anger. Then he determined to marry Lucy, and so have a right to her company on land or sea, at home or abroad.

For he argued only from his own passionate desire. Lucy had never said she loved him, yet he felt sure she did so. He loved her the moment they met, and he had no doubt Lucy had been affected in the same manner as himself. He knew her for his own, lost out of his soul-life long ago and suddenly found one afternoon as she stood with her father at the gate of their little garden. She had roses in her hands, or rather they were lying across her white arms, and her exquisite face rose above them, thrilling his heart with a strange but powerful sense of a right in her that was wholly satisfying and indisputable.

"I will suffer no one to part me from Lucy," he mused. "She is mine. She belongs to me, and to no other man in this world. I will not leave her. I might lose her; if I go away, she must go with me. She loves me! I know it! I feel it! When she sat at my side as we were driving together she *was me*. Her personality melted into mine, and Lucy Lugur and Harry Hatton were one. If I felt this, Lucy felt it. I will tell her, and she will believe me, for I am sure she shared that wonderful transfusion of the 'thee into me' which is beyond all explanation, and never felt but with the one soul that is our soul."

Thus as he walked down to the village he thrilled

Digitized by Google

himself with the pictures of his own imaginings; for a passionate bewildering love, that had all the unbearable realism of a dream, held him in its unconquerable grip. There may be men who can force themselves to be reasonable in such a condition, but Henry Hatton was not among them; and when he unexpectedly met Lucy's father in the village, he quite forgot that the man knew nothing at all of his affection for his daughter and his intention to marry her.

"Mr. Lugur," he cried almost joyfully, "I was looking for you, hoping to meet you, and here you are! I am so glad!"

Lugur looked up curiously. People did not usually address him with such pronounced pleasure, and with Henry Hatton he had not been familiar, or even friendly. "Good evening, Mr. Hatton," he answered, and he touched the cap set so straight and positive on his big, dark head with slight courtesy. "Have you any affair with me, sir?" he asked.

"I have."

"It is my busy night. I was going home, but——"

"Allow me to walk with you, Mr. Lugur."

"Very well. Talking will not hinder. I am at your service, sir."

Then Henry Hatton made his heart speak words which no one could have doubted. He was a natural orator, and he was moved by an impetuous longing, that feared nothing but its own defeat. He told Lugur all that he had told himself, and the

Digitized by Google

"He knew her for his own . . . as she stood with her father at the gate of their little garden."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

warmth and eagerness of his pleading touched the man deeply, though he did not interrupt him until he said, "I am going for a year's travel, and I want to marry Lucy, and take her with me."

Then he asked, "Have you spoken to my daughter on the subject of marriage?"

"I want your permission in order to gain hers."

"Does she know that you love her?"

"I have not told her so. I ask that you take me now to your home that I may speak to her this hour."

Lugur made no further remark, until they reached the schoolmaster's house. Then he said, "There is a light, as you may see, in the right-hand room; Lucy is there. Tell her I gave you permission to call on her. Leave the door of the room open; I shall be in the room opposite to it. You may remain an hour if you wish to do so. Leave at once if your visit troubles Lucy." Then with a cold smile he added, "I am her only cicerone, you see. She has no mother. You will remember *that,* Mr. Hatton." As he spoke, he was looking for his latch-key and using it. There was a lamp in the hall, and he silently indicated the door of the room in which Lucy was sitting. At the same moment he opened a door opposite and struck a light. Seeing Hatton waiting, he continued, "You have already introduced yourself—go in—the door is open."

He stood still a moment and listened to the faint flutter of Lucy's movement, and the joyous note in

Digitized by Google

her voice as she welcomed her lover. With a sigh, he then turned to a table piled with papers and slates and apparently gave himself up to the duty they entailed.

In the meantime Harry had seated himself by the side of Lucy, and was telling her in the delicious, stumbling patois of love all that was in his heart. She was bewilderingly beautiful; all his thoughts of her had been far below this intimate observation. Not that he analyzed or tabulated her charms—that would have been like pulling a rose to pieces. He only knew that her every glance and word and movement revealed a new personal grace. He only felt that her dress so daintily plain and neat and her simplicity and natural candor were the visible signs of a clear and limpid nature such as gods and men must love.

It was easy for Harry to tell her his love and his wishes. She understood him at once, and with sweet shy glances answered those two or three questions which are so generally whispered to a woman's heart and which hold the secret of her life and happiness. In this wonderful explanation the hour given was all too short, and Harry was just beginning to plead for an immediate marriage so that they might see the world together when Lugur entered the room and said it was the hour at which they usually closed the——

Harry did not let him finish his request. "Sir," he cried enthusiastically, "Lucy loves me. She loves

Digitized by Google

me as I love her. I was just asking her to marry me at once."

"That is an impossible request, Mr. Hatton. Under no circumstances, none whatever, would I permit Lucy to marry for at the least a year. Many things must be determined first. For instance, I must have a conversation with your mother and with Mr. John Hatton, your elder brother."

"You can see them tomorrow, sir—early in the morning—if you would be so kind to Lucy and myself, we should be very grateful—what time can you see them tomorrow?"

"You go too fast, sir. I cannot see either of them tomorrow, nor yet for many tomorrows."

"Oh, sir, Lucy loves me and I love her, and——"

"Love must learn to wait—to be patient and to be satisfied with hopes. I am weary, and we will bid you good night."

There was something so definite and positive in this good night that Harry felt it to be irresistible, and with an air of disappointment made his departure. At the outer door Lugur said, "I do not lack sympathy with you, Mr. Hatton, in your desire to hurry your marriage forward, but you must understand that there will be necessary delays. If you cannot bear the strain of waiting and of patiently looking forward, you are mistaken in the quality of your love and you had better give it up at once."

"No, sir. Right or wrong, it is my love, and

Digitized by Google

Lucy is the only woman who will ever bring joy or sorrow to me."

Lugur did not answer, but his tall, dark figure standing with his hand on the half-shut door impressed Harry painfully with the hopelessness of further argument. He bowed silently, but as he passed through the little gate the sound of the hastily closed door followed him up the hill to Hatton Hall. Lugur went into the parlor to look for his daughter; she had gone to her room. Some feeling of maidenly reserve had led her to take this step. She never asked herself why or wherefore; she only felt that it would be good for her to be alone, and the need had been so urgent that she forgot her father's usual good-night kiss and blessing. Lugur did not call her, but he felt the omission keenly. It was the first change; he knew that it prefigured many greater ones, and he was for the hour stunned by the suddenness of the sorrow he had to face. But Lugur had a stout heart, a heart made strong and sure by many sufferings and by one love.

He sat motionless for an hour or more; his life was concentered in thought, and thought does not always require physical movement. Indeed, intense thought on any question is, as a rule, still and steady as a rock. And Lugur was thinking of the one subject which was the prime mover of his earthly life—thinking of his daughter and trying to foresee the fate he had practically chosen for her, wonder-

Digitized by Google

ing if in this matter he had been right or wrong. He had told himself that Lucy must marry someone, and that Henry Hatton was the best of all her suitors. Thirsk he hardly took into consideration; but there was young Bradley and Squire Ashby and the Wesleyan minister, and his own assistant in the school. He had seen that these men loved her, each in his own way, but he liked none of them. Weighed in his balance, they were all wanting.

Neither was Henry Hatton without fault; but the Hatton family was good to its root, as far as he knew or could hear tell, and at least he had been frankly honest both with his daughter and himself. He found strength and comfort in this reflection, and finally through it reached the higher attitude, which made him rise to his feet, clasp his hands, and lift his face with whispered prayer to the Father and Lover of souls. Leaving Lucy in His care, his heart was at rest, and he lay down in peace and slept.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER V

THE HEARTH FIRE

He who has drunk of Love's sharp strong wine,
Will drink thereof till death.
Love comes in silence and alone
To meet the elected One.

. . . .

It was a chill, misty evening in the last days of September, and John Hatton was sitting by the fire in the great central hall. He was thinking of many things, but through all of them the idea of his brother Harry swept like an obliterating cloud. He was amazed at the hot impetuous love which had taken possession of the boy—for he still thought of him as a boy—and wondering how best to direct and control a passion that had grown like a force of Nature, which it really was. Now great and fervid emotions are supposed to be the true realization of life, but they do not, as a rule, soften the nature they invade; very frequently they render it cruel and indifferent to whomever or whatever appears to stand in the way of its desires. John realized this fact in Harry's case. He was going from home for a year, and yet he had never before been so careless and unconcerned about his home.

Digitized by Google

It was not a pleasant train of thought, and he was pleased when it was interrupted by the entrance of Mrs. Hatton. "Why, John, my dear," she said, "I was wondering if you had come home yet. Have you seen Harry?"

"Not since breakfast."

"He is with that girl, I suppose; or, if Lugur is at home, he is watching the house she lives in."

"He is very much in love. We must make the best of it. I thought he was in love with Polly Crowther—but it seems not. There is a little difference between the two girls."

"There is a big difference between them, and it is all in favor of Polly Crowther."

"As far as we can judge at present it is, but—whatever have you in your basket, mother? It smells like Paradise."

"I have herbs, John. I have been crushing down my heartache with work—there's nothing beats work if you're in trouble. I cleaned out my still room today, and I was carrying there the last pickings of lavender and rosemary, sage and marjoram, basil and mint. I can tell you, John, there's a deal of help in some way or other through sweet, pungent smells. They brightened me up a bit today, they did that!"

"To be sure they did, mother. They rise naturally to Heaven, and if we are willing, they carry our thoughts with them."

"I don't know about that, John. My thoughts

Digitized by Google

were not heavenly at all today, and I hope they stayed where they belonged. Take the tongs, John, and lift a lump of coal to the fire. I joy to see the blaze. I wouldn't like Hatton hearthstone to have the ill luck that has just come to Yates Manor House. You know, John, the fire in their hall has been burning for nearly two hundred years, never, never allowed to go out. The young squire always fed it as soon as the old squire went away. It was dead and cold this morning. Yates is past comforting. He says it bodes all kinds of misfortunes to them."

"How long ago is it since Hatton Hall fire was lit?"

"Well, John, our fire isn't out of counting, like some of the old hearth fires in Yorkshire. But Hatton fire will never go out, John. It was lit by a man that will not die, nor his name perish forever. *Why-a!* John Wesley kindled the fire on Hatton hearthstone."

"Say what you can about it, mother. My father has told me the story many a time, but I can never hear it too often."

"My dear lad, it was in the days of thy great-grandfather. One afternoon John Wesley came to Hatton and was met with honor and welcome. And word was sent far and near, to squire and farmer, hedger and ditcher. And at eight o'clock the good, great man stood up in Hatton's big barn in their midst. And he talked heavenly to them of Christ

Digitized by Google

and of the love of God that was not willing that *any* should perish, but that *all* should come to repentance. Eh, my dear, he talked till men and women were weeping for joy and hope, and the big barn felt as if it was on fire. And that night John Wesley sat a long while with the Master of Hatton, and it was past midnight when they went to bed. But very early in the morning—before cocklight it was —your great-grandfather came downstairs to see that Wesley had a cup of tea before his early start onward. And he found the good man had already lit a fire and infused the tea, and then and there it was made the law of Hatton household that the fire John Wesley kindled there must never go out, but be a sign and covenant of good to the House of Hatton as long as there was a man in Hatton to carry it on." As she was talking Mrs. Hatton had put her basket of herbs on a little table, and with glowing cheeks she now bent her head and inhaled their refreshing odors. John was silent for a few moments, and profoundly touched by the old homely story; then he said,

"My dear mother, it may be a son of Harry's that will be so favored. Had we not better accept his marriage as pleasantly as we can? Lucy Lugur is a beautiful girl, and that big fervent Welshman who is her father has doubtless made her the image of all that God and man love in a woman."

"Maybe Lugur has done his best with her, but women see a long sight further into women than

Digitized by Google

men do. I'll hev to seek and to find good reasons for Harry marrying so far below himself before I'll hev this or that to say or do with such an ill-sorted marriage. Now, John, get ready for thy dinner; none of us are going to do any waiting for a lad that thinks he can live on love."

John rose, smiling, and as he did so said, "Was that the way Methodism began, mother?"

"To be sure, it was. It began in the lanes and streets and in the barns and kitchens of old manor houses like Hatton Hall. Your great-grandfather used to say it was like a loud cry at midnight startling the sleepy world."

"It was the most picturesque domestic event of last century, as well as a religious——"

"Picturesque! I never thought of Methodism in that way, John; but I'll tell thee, it took the very heart of Yorkshire and set it to song and prayer—and cotton-spinning. It stopped a deal of gambling and racing and dog- and cock-fighting, and chapels and mills grew together all over the length and breadth of Yorkshire. They did that, and all that! I've heard my father say so many a time. Make haste now, my lad, dinner will spoil if tha keeps it waiting. Methodism is like enough to stand forever."

In this conversation Mrs. Hatton had dropped easily and naturally into the Yorkshire speech, as all Yorkshire people do when heart-touched. For Yorkshire is neither a dialect nor a patois; it is the

Digitized by Google

pure English of a thousand years ago, the English Chaucer spoke, and which Yorkshire has preserved in all its purity—especially about the Craven district. Mrs. Hatton had gone through finishing schools of the latest fashion and she made no trips in her usual social conversation, unless deeply moved, but if a little Yorkshire was a fault, it was a very general one, and there was no interesting conversation without such lapses into English pure and undefiled and often startlingly picturesque and to the point.

When John had left her she took her herbs to the still room, laid them in their places, and removed the large white linen apron which covered her from head to feet. Then she stood beautifully gowned in black satin with fine thread-lace cuffs turned back nearly to the elbows and a large collar of the same lace fastened at the throat with a brooch of gold and diamonds. Her black hair was fashionably dressed and finished with a small cap of lace and pink ribbon, and her feet shod in black satin sandals—a splendid woman of fifty-three years old, showing every grace at its finest with as yet no sign of decay in any of them.

John gave her his arm proudly, but he noticed that her face clouded before she was seated. She would not ask as to Harry's whereabouts, but she missed his presence, and anger grew in her heart. "He is with that girl," she thought, and she was sick with anxiety and inquietude. The roast sirloin was

Digitized by Google

done to the last perfect minute, and the Yorkshire pudding deliciously brown and light; the table was set without a flaw or a "forget," and the fire and light just as they should be. There was no obvious outlet for her annoyance, and it took away her appetite and made her silent.

John tried various interesting public topics—topics she had been eager about; but every allusion to them at this hour was scornfully received. Then he made a social effort. "I met Miss Phyllis Broadbent today, mother," he said.

"Where did you meet her?"

"She was walking past the mill."

"Waiting for you—and I'll warrant it."

"I would not say that much, mother. She was out collecting for the new cooking-school. She said she wanted to see you very much."

"And pray what for is she wanting to see me? I am not related to her. I owe her nothing. I'm not going to give her anything and I don't want to see her."

"I suppose she wants your help in this new charity she has on hand. She was very polite, and sent you all kinds of good wishes. There is no harm in good wishes, is there?"

"I'm not so sure of that. If Miss Phyllis gives her good wishes, there's no harm in them, but—but I don't want to buy them at any price. I'll tell you what it is, John——"

But she never told him at that hour, for as she

Digitized by Google

spoke Harry Hatton opened the door and looked in. "I am wet—dripping wet, mother," he said. "The mizzling rain turned to a downpour when I was halfway up the hill, but I will be ready for dinner in twenty minutes."

"And I am not going to keep beef and pudding on the table twenty minutes for you, Harry."

"That's right, mother. I don't deserve it. Send it to the kitchen. I'll have some partridge and pastry when I come down."

He was gone before his mother's answer could leave her lips; but there was a light in her eyes and a tone in her voice that made her a different woman as she said, "We will not talk of Miss Lugur tonight, John. There is plenty else to talk about. She is non-essential, and I believe in the man who said, 'Skip the non-essentials.' "

This proposal was carried out with all John's wisdom and kindness. He kept the conversation on the mill or on subjects relating to Harry's proposed journey until there was a sudden silence which for a moment or two no one appeared able to break. It was Mrs. Hatton who did so, and with a woman's instinct she plunged at once into a subject too sacred to dispute.

"My dear Harry," she said, in her clear vibrant voice, "my dear lad, John and I have just been talking of Wesley and how he came to light our hearthstone. You see, poor Squire Yates' fire went out last night."

Digitized by Google

"Never! Surely never, mother!"

"It did, my dear. Yates has no son, he is old and forgetful, and his nephew, who is only a Ramsby, was at Thornton market race, and nobody thought of the fire, and so out it went. They do say the squire is dying today. Well, then, Hatton Hall has two sons to guard her hearth, and I want to tell you, Harry, how our fire was saved not thirty years ago. Your grandfather was then growing poor and poorer every year, and with a heavy heart he was think, think, thinking of some plan to save the dear old home.

"One morning your father was walking round the Woodleigh meadows, for he thought if we sold them, and the Woodleigh house, we might put off further trouble for a while and give Good Fortune time to turn round and find a way to help us. And as he was walking and thinking Ezra Topham met him. Now, then, Ezra and your father were chief friends, even from their boyhood, and their fathers before them good friends, and indeed, as you know the Yorkshire way in friendship, it might go back of that and that again. And Ezra said these very words,

" 'Stephen, I'm going to America. My heart and hands were never made for trading and cotton-spinning. I hev been raised on the land. I hev lived on the land and eaten and drunk what the land gave me. All my forefathers did the same, and the noise and smell of these new-fangled factories takes

Digitized by Google

the heart out of me. I hev a bit of brass left, and while I hev it I am going to buy me a farm where good land is sold by the acre and not by feet and inches. Now, then, I'll sell thee my mill, and its fifty looms, and heppen it may do cheerfully for thee what it will not do anyway for me. Will tha buy it?' "

"Poor chap!" interrupted Harry. "I know just how he felt. I am sorry for him."

"You needn't be anything of that sort, Harry. He is a big landowner now and a senator and a millionaire. So save thy pity for someone that needs it. As I was saying, he offered to sell his mill to thy father and thy father snapped at the offer, and it was settled there and then as they stood in Woodleigh meadows."

"What did father pay for it?" asked Harry.

"Nay, my dear, I cannot tell thee. Thy father never told his women folk what he made or what he spent. It wasn't likely. But it was a fair bargain, no doubt, for when they had settled it, Ezra said, 'Good-bye, Stephen! I shall not see thee again in this world!' and he pulled out his watch and father took out his and they changed watches for the memory of each other. Then they clasped hands and said farewell. But they wrote to each other at every New Year, and when thy father died Ezra's watch was sent back to him. Then Ezra knew his friend had no longer any need to count time. He had gone into Eternity."

Digitized by Google

"It was a good custom, mother," said John. "It is a pity such customs are dying out."

"They have to die, John," answered Mrs. Hatton, "for there's no friendships like that now. People have newspapers and books dirt cheap and clubs just as cheap, and all kinds of balls to amuse them—they never feel the need of a friend. Just look at our John. He has lots of acquaintances, but he does not want to change watches with any man—does he, now?"

The young men laughed, and Harry said if they had let friends go they had not given up sweethearts. Then Mrs. Hatton felt they were on dangerous ground, and she continued her story at once.

"Thy father and I had been nearly three years married then, and John was a baby ten months old. I had not troubled myself much about debt or poverty or danger for the old Hall. I was happy enough with my little son, and somehow I felt sure that Stephen Hatton would overget all his worries and anxieties.

"Now listen to me! I woke up that night and I judged by the high moon that it was about midnight. Then I nursed my baby and tucked him snugly in his cradle. Thy father had not come to his bed but that was no care to me; he often sat reading or figuring half the night through. It was Stephen Hatton's way—but suddenly I heard a voice—the voice of a man praying. That is a sound, my dears, you can never mistake. When the soul speaks to

Digitized by Google

its God and its Father, it has a different voice to the one a man uses with his fellowmen, when he talks to them about warps and yarns and shillings.

"There was a soft, restful murmur of running water from the little beck by the rose garden, but far above it rose the voice of a man in strong urgent prayer. It came from the summer-house among the rose-trees, and as I listened, I knew it was your father's voice. Then I was frightened. Perhaps God would not like me to listen to what was only meant for His ear. I came away from the open window and sat down and waited.

"In a short time your father came to me. I could see that he had been praying. I could feel the spirit above the flesh. A great awe was over him and he was strangely loving and gentle. 'Martha,' he said, 'I am glad you are awake. I want to tell you something—something wonderful!' And I sat down by him, and he clasped my hand and said,

" 'I was tired out with figuring and counting, and near midnight I went out to cool and soothe my brain with the night air. And I suddenly thought of Jacob on his mysterious journey, meeting the angels of God as he slept in the wilderness, and wrestling with one for a blessing. And with the thought the spirit of prayer came to me, and I knelt down in the summer-house and prayed as I never prayed before in my life.

" 'I told God all my perplexities and anxieties. I

Digitized by Google

asked Him to straighten them out. I told God that I had bought Ezra's mill, and I asked Him to be my counselor and helper. I told Him I knew nothing about buying cotton or spinning cotton. I told Him it was the loss of everything if I failed. I promised Him to do my best, and I asked Him to help me to succeed; and, Martha, I solemnly vowed, if He would be with me and do for me, that His poor and His sick and His little children should have their share in every pound I made. And I swear to you, Martha, that I will keep my word, and if I may speak for my sons and my sons' sons, they also shall never fail in rendering unto God the thing I have promised. Remind me of it. Say to me, "Stephen, the Lord God is thy partner. Don't thee defraud Him of one farthing." ' And, my dears, when I promised he kissed me, and my cheeks were wet, and his cheeks were wet, but we were both of us very sure and happy.

"Well, my dear lads, after that your father walked straight forward to his place among the biggest cotton-spinners in England. People all said, Stephen Hatton was a very philanthropic man. He was something better. He was a just and honest man who never lied, who never defrauded the poor because they were poor, and who kept his contract with the Lord his God to the last farthing. I hope to see his sons and his sons' sons keep the covenant their father made for them. I do that. It would break my heart if they did not!"

Digitized by Google

Then John rose to his feet, precisely as he would have done if his father had entered the room, and he answered, "Mother, I joined hands with father six years ago on this subject. I will carry out all he promised if it takes my last penny. We thought then that Harry was too young to assume such——"

"I am not too young now, mother, and I wish to join John in every obligation my father made for himself and us. After this John must tithe my share just as he tithes his own."

Then while her heart was overflowing with a religious love and joy in her sons, Mrs. Hatton rose and bid them good night. "I will go to my room," she said. "I'll warrant I shall find the very company I want there."

"Stay with us, mother," said Harry. "I want to talk to you," and he was so persistent that it fretted her, and she asked with a touch of impatience,

"Harry Hatton, have you yet to learn that when a woman wants to be by herself she is expecting better company than you can give her?"

For a few moments the young men were silent. Mrs. Hatton took so much vitality out of the room with her that the level of the atmosphere was sensibly disturbed, and had to be readjusted before it was comfortably useful. John sat still during this period. His sight was inward and consequently his eyes were dropped. Harry was restless, his sight was outward and his eyes far-seeking. He was the first to speak.

Digitized by Google

"John," he said, in a tone holding both anger and grief, "John, you behaved unkindly to me this evening. You either persuaded mother to talk as she did, or you fell in with her intention and helped her."

"You might speak plainer, Harry."

"I will. Both mother and you, either by accident or agreement, prevented me naming Lucy. Lucy was the only subject I wanted to talk about, and you prevented me."

"If I did, it was the wisest and kindest thing I could do."

"For yourselves—but how about me?"

"I was thinking of you only."

"Then you must think of Lucy with me."

"It is not yet a question of *must*. If it comes to that, both mother and I will do all the situation calls for. In the interval, we do not wish to discuss circumstances we may never be compelled to face."

"Then you are counting on my being drowned at sea, or on Lucy dying or else marrying someone while I am away."

John was silent so long that Harry began to enlarge on his last proposition. "Of course," he continued, "I may be drowned, and if Lucy was false to me a watery grave of any kind would be welcome; but——"

"Harry," said John, and he leaned forward and put his hand on his brother's knee, "Harry, my dear lad, listen to me. I am going to tell you something

Digitized by Google

I have never told even mother. You have met Lady Penryn, I suppose?"

"I have seen her three or four times in the hunting field. She rides horses no one else would mount. She does everything at the danger point. Lord Thirsk said she had been disappointed in love and wanted to kill herself."

"Did you think her handsome?"

"Oh, dear, no! Far from it! She is blowsy and fat, has far too much color, and carries too much flesh in spite of the rough way she uses herself."

"Harry, eight years ago I was as madly in love with Lady Penryn as you are now with Lucy Lugur. All that you are suffering I have suffered. Eight years ago we parted with tears and embraces and the most solemn promises of faithful love. In four months she was married to Lord Penryn."

"Oh, John, what did you do?"

"I forgot her."

"How could you?"

"As soon as I knew she was another man's wife, I did not dare to think of her, and finding how much *thought* had to do with this sin, I filled my thoughts with complex and fatiguing business; in a word, I refused to think of her in any way.

"Six years afterwards I met her at a garden party; she was with a crowd of men and women. She had lost all her power over me. My pulses beat at their ordinary calm pace and my heart was unmoved."

"And how did she bear the ordeal?"

Digitized by Google

"She said, 'Good afternoon, Mr. Hatton. I think we may have met before.' A few days ago, we passed each other on the highway between Hatton and Overton. I lifted my hat, and she pretended not to see me."

"Oh, John, how could the woman treat you so!"

"She acted wisely. I thank her for her discretion. Now, Harry, give yourself and Lucy time to draw back, if either of you find out you have been mistaken. There are many engagements in life that can be broken and no great harm done; but a marriage engagement, if once fulfilled, opens to you the gates of all Futurity, and if there are children it is irrevocable by any law. No divorce undoes it. You may likely unroll a long line of posterity who will live when you are forgotten, but whose actions, for good or evil, will be traced back to you."

"Well, then, John, if I am to go away and give myself an opportunity to draw back, I want to go immediately. Lucy's father takes her to an aunt in Bradford tomorrow. I think when people grow old, they find a perfect joy in separating lovers."

"It is not only your love affairs that want pause and consideration, Harry. You appear to hate your business as much as you ought to love and honor it, and I am in hopes that a few weeks or months of nothing to do will make you glad to come back to the mill. If not——"

"What then will you do for me, John?"

"I will buy your share of the mill."

Digitized by Google

"Thank you, John. I know you are good to me, but you cannot tell how certain I am about Lucy; yes, and the mill, too."

"Well, my dear lad, I believe you tonight; but what I want you to believe is that tomorrow some new light may shine and you may see your thoughts on these two subjects in a different way. Just keep your mind open to whatever you may see or hear that can instruct your intentions. That is all I ask. If you are willing to be instructed, the Instructor will come, not perhaps, but certainly."

Four days after this conversation life in Hatton had broken apart, and Harry was speeding down the Bay of Biscay and singing the fine old sea song called after it, to the rhythm and music of its billowy surge. The motion of the boat, the wind in the sails, the "chanties" of the sailors as they went about their work, and the evident content and happiness around him made Harry laugh and sing and toss away his cap and let the fresh salt wind blow on his hot brain in which he fancied the clack and clamor of the looms still lingered. He thought that a life at sea, resting or sailing as the mood took him, would be a perfect life if only Lucy were with him.

Sitting at dinner he very pointedly made the absence of women the great want in this otherwise perfect existence. The captain earnestly and strongly denied it. "There is nowhere in the world," he said, "where a woman is less wanted than on a ship. They interfere with happiness and comfort

Digitized by Google

in every way. If we had a woman on board tonight, she would be deathly seasick or insanely frightened. A ship with a woman's name is just as much as any captain can manage. You would be astonished at the difference a name can make in a ship. When this yacht belonged to Colonel Brotherton, she was called the *Dolphin,* and God and angels know she tried to behave like one, diving and plunging and careering as if she had fins instead of sails. I was captain of her then and I know it. Well, your father bought her, and your mother threw a bottle of fine old port over her bow, and called her the *Martha Hatton,* and she has been a different ship ever since—ladylike and respectable, no more butting of the waves, as if she was a ram; she lifts herself on and over them and goes curtseying into harbor like a duchess."

As they talked the wind rose, and the play of its solemn music in the rigging of the yacht and in the deep bass of the billows was, as Harry said, "like a chant of High Mass. I heard one for the sailors leaving Hull last Christmas night," he said, "and I shall never forget it."

"But you are a Methodist, sir?"

"Oh, that does not hinder! A good Methodist can pray wherever there is honest prayer going on. John was with me, and I knew by John's face he was praying. I was but a lad, but I said 'Our Father,' for I knew that Christ's words could not be wrong wherever they were said."

Digitized by Google

"Well, sir, I hope you will recover your health soon and be able to return to your business."

"My health, Captain, is firstrate! I have not come to sea for my health. Surely to goodness, John did not tell you that story?"

"No, he did not, and I saw that you were well enough as soon as you came on board."

"Well, Captain, I am here to try how a life of pleasure and idleness will suit me. I hate the mill, I hate its labor and all about it, and John thought a few months of nothing to do would make me go cheerfully back to work."

"Do you think it will?"

"I say no—downright."

"And what then, sir?"

"I really cannot say what I may do. I have a bit of money from my father, and I know lots of good fellows who seem happy enough without business or work of any kind. They just amuse themselves or have some fad of pleasure-making like fast horses."

"Such men ought never to have been born, sir. They only cumber the mills and the market-places, the courts of law and the courts of the church—yes, even the wide spaces of the ocean."

"Are you not a bit hard, Captain?"

"No; I am not hard enough. Do you think God sent any man that had his five senses into this busy world to *amuse* himself?"

"Are you preaching me a sermon, Captain?"

Digitized by Google

"Nay, not I! Preaching is nothing in my line. But you are on a new road, sir, and no one can tell where it may lead to, so I'll just remind you to watch your beginnings; the results will manage themselves."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VI

LOVE'S YOUNG DREAM

Love is the only link that binds us to those gone; the only link that binds us to those who remain. Surely it *is* the spiritual world—the abiding kingdom of heaven, not far from any one of us.

On a day of grace, she came of God's grace to me.

One night at the end of October Mrs. Hatton was sitting in the living-room of the Hall. To say "sitting," however, is barely true, for she was in that irritably anxious mood which both in men and women usually runs into motion, and Mrs. Hatton was more frequently off her chair than on it. She lifted the brass tongs and put a few pieces of coal on the fire; she walked to the window and looked down the long vista of trees; she arranged chairs and cushions, that did not need arranging; she sent away the large tortoise-shell cat that was watching as eagerly as herself for John's return; and finally her restlessness found a tongue.

"What for are you worrying about the lad, Martha Hatton? He's grown up, you know, and he

Digitized by Google

isn't worrying about you. I'll warrant that some way or other he's with that Harlow girl, and where's his poor mother then? Clean forgotten, of course. Sons and daughters, indeed! They are a bitter pleasure, they are that. Here's John getting on to thirty years old, and I never knew it in his shoes to run after a girl before—but there—I'm downdaunted with the changes that will have to come—yes, that will have to come—well, well, life is just a hurry-push! One trouble after another—that's John's horse, I know its gallop, and it is high time he was here, it is that. Besides, it's dribbling rain, and I wouldn't wonder if it was teeming down in half an hour—and there's Tom crying for all he's worth—I may as well let him in—come in, Tom!" —and Tom walked in with an independent air to the rug and lay down by John's footstool. Indeed, his attitude was impudent enough to warrant Mrs. Hatton's threat to "turn him out-of-doors, if he did not carry himself more like a decent cat and less like a blackguard."

The creature knew well enough what was said to him. He lay prone on the rug, with his head on his forepaws, watching Mrs. Hatton; and she was a little uncomfortable and glad when John entered the room. The cat ran to meet him, but John went straight to his mother's side and said,

"Dear mother, I want your kiss and blessing tonight. God has given me the desire of my heart, but I am not satisfied until you share my joy."

Digitized by Google

"That means that God has given you the love and promise of Jane Harlow."

"Yes, that is what I mean. Sit down, mother; I must talk the matter over with you, or I shall miss some of the sweetest part of it."

Then she lifted her face and looked at him, and it was easy to see that Love and the man had met. Never before in all his life had she seen him so beautiful—his broad, white forehead, his bright contemplative eyes, his sweet, loving, thoughtful face breaking into kind smiles, his gentle manner, and his scrupulously refined dress made a picture of manhood that appealed to her first, as a mother, and secondly, as a woman. And in her heart an instantaneous change took place. She put her hands on his shoulders and lifted her face for his kiss.

"My good son!" she said. "Thy love is my love, and thy joy is my joy! Sit thee down, John, and tell me all about it."

So they sat down together on the bright hearth, sat down so close that John could feel the constant touch of his mother's hand—that white, firm hand which had guided and comforted him all his life long.

"Mother," he said, "if anyone had told me this morning that I should be Jane's betrothed husband before I slept this night, I would hardly have believed in the possibility. But Love is like a flower; it lies quiet in its long still growth, and then in some happy hour it bursts into perfect bloom. I had fin-

Digitized by Google

ished my business at Overton and stayed to eat the market dinner with the spinners. Then in the quiet afternoon I took my way home, and about a mile above the village I met Jane. I alighted and took the bridle off Bendigo's neck over my arm, and asked permission to walk with her. She said she was going to Harlow House, and would be glad of my company. As we walked she told me they intended to return there; she said she felt its large rooms with their faded magnificence to be far more respectable than the little modern villa with its creaking floors and rattling windows in which they were living."

"She is quite right," said Mrs. Hatton. "I wonder at them for leaving the old place. Many a time and oft I have said that."

"She told me they had been up there a good deal during the past summer and had enjoyed the peace and solitude of the situation; and the large silent rooms were full of stories, she said—love stories of the old gay Regency days. I said something about filling them with love stories of the present day, and she laughed and said her mother was going there to farm the land and make some money out of it; and she added with a smile like sunshine, 'And I am going to try and help her. That accounts for our walk this afternoon, Mr. Hatton,' and I told her I was that well pleased with the walk, I cared little for what had caused it.

"In a short time we came in sight of the big, lonely house and entered the long neglected park

Digitized by Google

and garden. I noticed at once a splendid belt of old ash-trees that shielded the house from the north and northeast winds. I asked Jane if she knew who planted them, and she said she had heard that the builder of the house planted the trees. Then I told her I suspected the builder had been a very wise man, and when she asked why I answered, 'Because he could hardly have chosen a better tree. The ash represents some of the finest qualities in human nature.' "

"That wasn't much like love talk, John."

"It was the best kind of talk, mother. There had to be some commonplace conversation to induce that familiarity which made love talk possible. So I told her how the ash would grow *anywhere*—even at the seaside, where all trees lean from the sea—*except the ash.* Sea or no sea, it stands straight up. Even the oak will shave up on the side of the wind, *but not the ash.* And best of all, the ash bears pruning better than any other tree. Pruning! That is the great trial both for men and trees, mother. None of us like it, but the ash-tree makes the best of it."

"What did she say to all this rigmarole about trees?"

"She said there was something very human about trees, that she had often watched them tewing with a great wind, tossing and fretting, but very seldom giving way to it. And she added, 'They are a great deal more human than mountains. I really think

Digitized by Google

they talk about people among themselves. I have heard those ash-trees laughing and whispering together. Many say that they know when the people who own them are going to die. Then, on every tree there are some leaves splashed with white. It was so the year father died. Do you believe in signs, Mr. Hatton?' she asked.

"Then, mother, without my knowledge or intention I answered, *'Oh, my dear!* The world is full of signs and the man must be deaf and blind that does not believe in them. I have seen just round Hatton that the whole bird world is ruled by the signs that the trees hang out.' And she asked me what they were, and I told her to notice next spring that as soon as the birch-leaves opened, the pheasant began to crow and the thrush to sing and the blackbird to whistle; and when the oak-leaves looked their reddest, and not a day before, the whole tribe of finches broke into song.

"Thus talking, mother, and getting very close and friendly with each other, we passed through the park, and I could not help noticing the abundance of hares and pheasants. Jane said they had not been molested since her father's death, but now they were going to send some of them to market. As we approached the house, an old man came to meet us and I gave my horse to his care. He had the keys of the house and he opened the great door for us. The Hall was very high and cold and lonely, but in a parlor on the right-hand side we found an

Digitized by Google

old woman lighting a fire which was already blazing merrily. Jane knew her well and she told her to make us a pot of tea and bring it there. With her own hands she drew forward a handsome Pembroke table, and then we went together through the main rooms of the house. They were furnished in the time of the Regency, Jane said, and it was easy to recognize the rich, ornate extravagance of that period. In all this conversation, mother, we were drawing nearer and nearer to each other and I kept in mind that I had called her once 'my dear' and that she had shown no objection to the words."

"I suppose the old man and woman were John Britton and his wife Dinah. I believe they have charge of the place."

"I think so. I heard Jane give the man some orders about the glass in the windows and he spoke to her concerning the bee skeps and the dahlia bulbs being all right for winter. In half an hour there was a nice little tea ready for us, and just imagine, mother, how it felt for me to be sitting there drinking tea with Jane!"

"Was it a nice tea, John?"

"Mother, what can I tell you? I wasn't myself at all. I only know that Dinah came in and out with hot cakes and that Jane put honey on them and gave them to me with smiles and kind words. It was all wonderful! If I had been dreaming, I might have felt just as much out of the body."

"Jane can be very charming, I know that, John."

Digitized by Google

"She was something better than charming, mother; she was kind and just a little quiet. If she had been laughing and noisy and in one of her merry moods, it would not have been half so enchanting. It was her sweet sedateness that gave sureness and reality to the whole affair.

"We left Harlow House just as the hunting-moon was rising. Its full yellow splendor was over everything, and Jane looked almost spiritual in its transfiguring light. Mother, I do not remember what I said, as I walked with her hand-in-hand through the park. Ask your own heart, mother. I have no doubt father said the same words to you. There can only be one language for an emotion so powerful. Wise or foolish, Jane understood what I said, and in words equally sweet and foolish she gave me her promise. Oh, mother, it was not altogether the words! It was the little tremors and coy unfoldings and sweet agitations of love revealing itself—it wakened in Jane's heart like a wandering rose. And I saw this awakening of the woman, mother, and it was a wonderful sight."

"John, you have had an experience that most men miss; be thankful for it."

"I am, mother. As long as I live, I will remember it."

"Did you see Mrs. Harlow?"

"For a short time only. She was much pleased at her daughter's choice. She thought our marriage might disarrange some of her own plans, but

Digitized by Google

she said Jane's happiness came before all other considerations."

"Well, John, it is more than a few hours since you had that wonderful tea with cakes and honey. You must have your proper eating, no matter what comes or goes. What do you say to a slice of cold roast beef and some apple pie?"

"Nay, mother, I'm not beef hungry. I'll have the apple pie, and a pitcher of new milk."

"And then thou must go to bed and settle thyself with a good, deep sleep."

"To be sure, mother. Joy tires a man as trouble does, but a deep sleep will rest and steady me."

So John went to the deep, steadying sleep he needed; it was Mrs. Hatton who watched the midnight hours away in anxious thought and careful forebodings. She had not worried much about Harry's passion for Lucy Lugur. She was sure that his Mediterranean trip would introduce him to girls so much lovelier than Lucy that he would practically have forgotten her when he returned. Harry had been in love with half a dozen girls before Lucy. She let Harry slip out of her consideration.

John's case was different. It was vitally true and intense. She understood that John must marry or be miserable, and she faced the situation with brimming eyes and a very heavy heart. She had given John her loving sympathy, and she would not retract a word of it to him. But to God she could open her heart and to Him she could tell even those

Digitized by Google

little things she would not speak of to any human being. She could ask God to remember that, boy and man, John had stood by her side for nearly thirty years, and that he was leaving her for a woman who had been unknown a year ago.

She could tell God that John's enthusiastic praise of this strange woman had been hard to bear, and she divined that at least for a time she might have to share her home with her. She anticipated all the little offenses she must overlook, all the small unconsidered slights she must pass by. She knew there would be difficulties and differences in which youth and beauty would carry the day against truth and justice; and she sat hour after hour marshaling these trials of her love and temper and facing them all to their logical end.

Some women would have said, "Time enough to face a trial when it comes." No, it is too late then. Trials apprehended are trials defended; and Martha Hatton knew that she could not trust herself with unexpected trials. In that case she believed the natural woman would behave herself naturally, and say the words and do the deeds called forth by the situation. So Martha in this solemn session was seeking strength to give up, strength to bear and to forbear, strength to see her household laws and customs violated, and not go on the aggressive for their sanctity.

She had a custom that devout women in all ages have naturally followed. She sat quiet before God

Digitized by Google

and spoke to Him in low, whispered words. It was not prayer; it was rather the still confidence of one who asks help and counsel from a Friend, able and willing to give it.

"Dear God," she said, in a voice that none but God could hear, "give me good, plain, household understanding—let me keep in mind that there is no foolishness like falling out—help me to hold my temper well in hand so that I may put things right as fast as they go wrong. I am jealous about John —it *is* hard to give him up. Thou gavest him to me, Thou knowest. Oh, let nothing that happens unmother me!"

In this way she sat in the dark and silence and asked and waited for the answer. And no doubt it came, for about two o'clock she rose up like one that had been strengthened and went calmly to her rest.

In the morning the first shock of the coming change was over, the everyday use and wont of an orderly house restored the feeling of stability, and Martha told herself things might turn out better than looked likely. John was just as loving and attentive as he had always been, and when he asked her to call on Jane Harlow as soon as she could and give her welcome into the Hatton family, she did not impute his attentions to any selfish motive.

Nevertheless, it was as the Lady of Hatton Manor, rather than as John's mother, she went to make this necessary call. She dressed with the great-

Digitized by Google

est care, and though she was a good walker, chose to have her victoria with its pair of white ponies carry her to the village. Jane met her at the gate of their villa and the few words of necessary welcome were spoken with a kindness which there was no reason to doubt.

With Mrs. Harlow Martha had a queer motherly kind of friendship, and it was really by her advice the ladies had been led to think of a return to Harlow House. For she saw that the elder woman was unhappy for want of some interest in life, and she was sure that the domestic instinct, as well as the instinct for buying and selling, was well developed in her and only wanted exercise. Indeed, an hour's conversation on the possibilities of Harlow House, of the money to be made on game, poultry, eggs, milk, butter, honey, fruit, had roused such good hopes in Mrs. Harlow's heart that she could hardly wait until the house was put in order and the necessary servants hired.

She relied on Martha like a child, and anyone who did that was sure of her motherly kindness. On this day Martha was particularly glad to turn the conversation on the subject. She spoke of Jane's marriage and pointed out what a comfort it would be when she was alone to be making a bit of money at every turn. "Why!" she cried enthusiastically. "Instead of moping over the fire with some silly tale of impossible tragedy, you will have your dairy and poultry to look after. Even in winter they bring in

Digitized by Google

money, and there's game to send to market every week. Hares come as fast as they go, and partridge are hardy and plentiful. Why, there's a little fortune lying loose in Harlow! If I were you, I would make haste to pick it up."

This was a safe and encouraging subject, and Mrs. Hatton pressed it for all it was worth. It was only Jane that saw any objections to their immediate removal to Harlow House. She said Lord Harlow, as her nearest relative and the head of their house, had been written to that morning, being informed of her intended marriage, and she thought no fresh step ought to be taken until they heard from him.

But this or that, Martha Hatton spent more than two hours with the Harlow ladies, and she left them full of hope and enthusiasm. And oh, how good, how charming, how strengthening is a new hope in life! The two ladies were ten or twelve degrees higher in moral atmosphere when Mrs. Hatton left them than they had been before her call. And she went away laughing and saying pleasant things and the last flirt of her white kerchief as her victoria turned up the hill was like the flutter of some glad bird's wing.

In four days there was a letter of great interest and kindness from Lord Harlow. He said that he was well acquainted with Mr. John Hatton from many favorable sources and that the marriage arranged between him and his niece Jane Harlow was satisfactory in all respects. Further she was in-

Digitized by Google

formed that Lady Harlow requested her company during the present season in London. It would, she said, be her duty and her pleasure to assist in getting ready her niece's wedding outfit, but she left her to fix the day on which she would come to London.

This letter was a little thunderbolt in the Harlow villa, and Jane said she could not go away until her mother was settled at Harlow House. John was much troubled at this early break in his love dream, but Mrs. Harlow would not listen to any refusal of Lord and Lady Harlow's invitation. She said Jane had never seen anything of life, and it was only right she should do so before settling down at Hatton. Besides, her uncle and aunt's gifts would be very necessary for her wedding outfit. In the privacy of her own thoughts—yes, and several times to her daughter—she sighed deeply over this late kindness of Lord and Lady Harlow. She wished that Jane had been asked before she was engaged; nobody knew in that case what good fortune might have come. It was such a pity!

Mrs. Harlow's removal was not completed until Christmas was so close at hand that it was thought best to make it the time for their return home. It was really John and Mrs. Hatton who managed the whole business of the removal, and to their efforts the complete comfort—and even beauty—of the old residence was due. But the days spent in this work were days full of the sweet intimacies of love. John

Digitized by Google

could never forget one hour of them, and it added to their charm to see and hear Martha Hatton everywhere, her hands making beauty and comfort, her voice sounding like a cheerful song in all the odd corners and queer places of the house.

Upon the whole it was a wonderful Christmas, but when it was over the realities of life were to face. Jane was going to London and John wondered how he was to bear the days without her. In the spring he would begin to build the house for himself he had long contemplated building. The plan of it had been fully explained to Jane, and had been approved by her, and John was resolved to break ground for the foundation as soon as it was possible to do so. And he calculated somewhat on the diversion he would find in building a home for the woman he so dearly loved.

Then the parting came, and John with tears and misgivings sent his darling into the unknown world of London. It was a great trial to him; fears and doubts and sad forebodings gave him tragic hours. It was a new kind of loneliness that he felt; nothing like it had ever come to him before.

"My food has lost all flavor," he said to his mother, "and I cannot get any good sleep. I am very unhappy."

"Well, my dear," she answered, "if you don't turn your suffering into some sort of gain, you'll be a great loser. But if you turn it into patience or good hope or good temper you will make gain out

Digitized by Google

of it. You will buy it with a price. You will pay yourself down for it. It will be yours forever. To be plain with you, John, you have been peevish all day long. I wouldn't if I were you. Nothing makes life taste so bitter in your mouth as a peevish temper."

"Why, mother! What do you mean?"

"Just what I say, John, and it is not like you. You have no real trouble. Jane Harlow is having what any girl would call a happy time. There is nothing wrong in it. She does not forget you, and you must not make troubles out of nothing, or else real troubles are sure to come. Surely you know *who* to go to in your trouble?"

"Yes! Yes! In anxiety and fear we learn how necessary it was that God should come to us as man. 'It is our flesh that we seek and that we find in the Godhead. It is a face like my face that receives me, a Man like to me that I love and am loved by forever.' I have learned how necessary the revelation of Christ was in these lonely weeks. I did not know I was cross. I will mend that."

"Do, my dear. It isn't like John Hatton to be cross. No, it isn't!"

Slowly the winter passed. John went several times to London during it and was kindly and honorably entertained by Lord Harlow during his visits. Then he saw his Jane in environments that made him a little anxious about the future. Surrounded by luxury, a belle and favorite in society,

Digitized by Google

a constant participator in all kinds of amusement and the recipient of much attention, how would she like to settle down to the exact monotony of life at Hatton?

It was well for John that he had none of the Hellenic spirit in him. He was not tempted to sit down and contemplate his worries. No, the Hebrew spirit was the nobler one, and he persistently chose it—"get thee forth into their midst, and whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." John instinctively followed this advice, so that even his employees noticed his diligence and watchfulness about everything going on.

In the earliest days of April when spring was making the world fresh and lovely and filling the balmy air with song, John thought of the home for himself that he would build and he determined to see the man who was to dig the foundation that night. He had just received a letter from Jane, and she said she was weary of London, and longing to be with her dear mother at Harlow House, or indeed anywhere that would allow her to see him every day. A very little kindness went a long way with John and such words lying near his heart made him wonderfully happy. And because he was happy he was exceedingly busy. Even Greenwood did not trouble him with observations; and official conversation was reduced to monosyllables. People came in and left papers and went out without a word; and there was a pressure on John to "do

Digitized by Google

whatsoever his hand found to do with all his might."

Suddenly the door was flung open with unrestricted force and noise and John raised his head to reprove the offender. Instead of this, he rose from his chair and with open arms took his brother to his heart. "Why, Harry!" he cried. "Mother will be glad to see you. I was thinking of you while I dressed myself this morning. When did you reach England?"

"I got to London three days ago."

"Never! I wouldn't tell mother that! She will think you ought to have been at Hatton three days ago."

"I had to look after Lucy, first thing. I found her, John, in Bradford in a sad state."

"I don't understand you, Harry."

"Her father had left her with a very strict aunt, and she was made to do things she never had done —work about the house, you know—and she looked ill and sorrowful and my heart ached for her. Her father was away from her, and she thought I had forgotten her. The dear little woman! I married her the next day."

"Henry Hatton! What are you saying?"

"I married there and then, as it were. It was my duty to do so."

"It was your will. There was no duty in it."

"Call it what you like, John. She is now my wife and I expect you and mother will remember this."

"You are asking too much of mother."

Digitized by Google

"You said you would stand by me in this matter."

"I thought you would behave with some consideration for others. Is it right for you to expect mother to take an entire stranger into her home, a girl for whom she had no liking? Why should mother do this?"

"Because I love the girl."

"You are shamelessly selfish, and a girl who could make a mother's love for you a pretext for entering Hatton Hall as her right is not a nice girl."

"Lucy has done nothing of the kind. She is satisfied in the hotel. Do you want me to stay at the hotel?"

"I should feel very much hurt if you did."

"But I shall stay where my wife stays."

"You had better go and see mother. What she does I will second."

"John, can you settle the matter of the mill now? I want no more to do with it and you know you promised to buy my share in that case."

"I want to build my home. I cannot build and buy at the same time."

"Why need you build? There is Hatton Hall for you, and mother will not object to the nobly born Jane Harlow."

"We will not talk of Miss Harlow. Harry, my dear, dear brother, you have come home to turn everything upside down. Let me have a little time to think. Go and see mother. I will talk to you

Digitized by Google

immediately afterwards. Where did you leave the yacht?"

"At London. I disliked Captain Cook. I felt as if I was with a tutor of some sort all the time. He said he would take the yacht to her wharf at Whitby and then write to you. You ought to have a letter today. I don't think you are very glad to see me, John."

"Oh, Harry, you have married that girl, quite regardless of how your marriage would affect your family! You ought to have given us some time to prepare ourselves for such a change."

"Lucy was in trouble, and I could not bear to see her in trouble."

"Well, go and see mother. Perhaps you can bear mother's trouble more easily."

"I hope mother will be kinder to me than you have been. John, I have no money. Let me have a thousand pounds till we settle about the mill."

"Do you know what you are asking, Harry? A thousand pounds would run Hatton Hall for a year."

"I have to live decently, I suppose."

With these words he left the mill and went at once to the Hall. Mrs. Hatton was in the garden, tying up some straying branches of honeysuckle. At her feet were great masses of snowdrops tall and white among moss and ivy, and the brown earthen beds around were cloth of gold with splendid crocus flowers; but beyond these things, she saw her son

Digitized by Google

as soon as he reached the gate. And she called him by his name full and heartily and stood with open arms to receive him.

Harry plunged at once into his dilemma. "Mother! Mother!" he cried, taking both her hands in his. "Mother, John is angry with me, but you will stand by me, I know you will. It is about Lucy, mother. I found her in great trouble, and I took her out of it. Don't say I did wrong, mother. Stand by me—you always have done so."

"You took her out of it! Do you mean that you married her?"

"How else could I help her? She is my wife now, and I will take care that no one troubles her. May I bring her to see you, mother?"

Mrs. Hatton stood looking at Harry. It was difficult for her to take in and believe what she heard, but in a few moments she said,

"Where is she?"

"At the little hotel in the village."

"You must bring her here at once. She ought never to have gone to the hotel. Dear me! What will people say?"

"Thank you, mother."

"Take my victoria. James is in the stable and he will drive it. Go for your wife at once. She must come to your home."

"And you will try and love her for my sake, mother?"

"Nay, nay! If I can't love the lass for her own

Digitized by Google

sake, I'll never love her for thy sake. But if she is thy wife, she will get all the respect due thy wife. If she can win more, she'll get more, and that is all there is to it."

With this concession Harry had to be satisfied. He brought his wife to the Hall and Mrs. Hatton met her with punctilious courtesy. She gave her the best guest room and sent her own maid to help her dress. The little woman was almost frightened by the ceremonious nature of her reception. But when John came home he called her "Lucy," and tempered by many little acts of brotherly kindness, that extreme politeness which is harder to bear than hard words.

And as John and his mother sat alone and unhappy after Harry and his wife had bid them good night, John attempted to comfort his mother. "You carried yourself bravely and kindly, mother," he said, "but I see that you suffer. What do you think of her?"

"She is pretty and docile, but she isn't like a mother of Hatton men. Look at the pictured women in the corridor upstairs. They were born to breed and to suckle men of brain and muscles like yourself, John. The children of little women are apt to be little in some way or other. Lucy does not look motherly, but Harry is taken up with her. We must make the best of the match, John, and don't let the trial of their stay here be too long. Get them away as soon as possible."

Digitized by Google

"Harry says that he has decided to make his home in or near London."

"Then he is going to leave the mill?"

"Yes."

"What is he thinking of?"

"Music or art. He has no settled plans. He says he must settle his home first."

"Well, when Harry can give up thee and me for that girl, we need not think much of ourselves. I feel a bit humiliated by being put below her."

"Don't look at it in that way, mother."

"Nay, but I can't help it. I wonder wherever Harry got his fool notions. He was brought up in the mill and for the mill, and I've always heard say that as the twig is bent the tree is inclined."

"That is only a half-truth, mother. You have the nature of the tree to reckon with. You may train a willow-tree all you like but you will never make it an oak or an ash. Here is Harry who has been trained for a cotton-spinner turns back on us and says he will be an artist or a singer, and what can we do about it? It is past curing or altering now."

But though the late owner of Hatton Mill had left the clearest instructions concerning its relation to his two sons, the matter was not easily settled. He had tied both of them so clearly down to his will in the matter that it was found impossible to alter a tittle of his directions. Practically it amounted to a just division of whatever the mill had

Digitized by Google

made after the tithe for charities had been first deducted. It gave John a positive right to govern the mill, to decide all disputes, and to stand in his place as master. It gave to Henry the same financial standing as his brother, but strictly denied to either son who deserted the mill any sum of larger amount than five thousand pounds; "to be made in one payment, and not a shilling more." A codicil, however, three years later, permitted one brother to buy the other out at a price to be settled by three large cotton-spinners who had long been friends of the Hatton family. These directions appeared to be plain enough but there was delay after delay in bringing the matter to a finish. It was nearly a month before Harry had his five thousand pounds in his pocketbook, and during this time he made no progress with his mother. She thought him selfish and indifferent about the mill and his family. In fact, Harry was at that time a very much married man, and though John was capable of considering the value of this affection, John's mother was not. John looked on it as a safeguard for the future. John's mother saw it only as a marked and offensive detail of the present. Lucy did nothing to help the situation. In spite of the attention paid her, she knew that she was unwelcome. "Your people do not like me, Harry," she complained; and Harry said some unkind things concerning his people in reply.

So the parting was cool and constrained, and Harry went off with his bride and his five thousand

Digitized by Google

pounds, caring little at that time for any other consideration.

"He will come to himself soon, mother," said John. "It isn't worth while to fret about him."

"I never waste anything, John, least of all love and tears. I can learn to do without, as well as other mothers."

But it was a hard trial, and her tired eyes and weary manner showed it. John was not able to make any excuse she would listen to about Harry's marriage. Its hurried and almost clandestine character deeply offended her; and the young wife during her visit had foolishly made a point of exhibiting her power over her husband, while both of them seemed possessed by that egotistical spirit which insists on their whole world seeing how vastly superior their love is to any other love that ever had been. Undoubtedly the young couple were offensive to everyone, and Mrs. Hatton said they had proved to her perfect satisfaction the propriety and even the necessity for the retirement of newly married people to some secluded spot for their honeymoon.

Soon after their departure Jane Harlow returned. She came home attended by the rumor of her triumphs and enriched by a splendid wardrobe and many fine pieces of jewelry. She told modestly enough the story of the life she had been leading, and Mrs. Hatton was intensely interested in it.

"Jane Harlow is a woman of a thousand parts, and you have chosen a wife to bring you friendship

Digitized by Google

and honor," she said to John. "Dear knows one cannot weary in her company. She has an opinion on every subject."

"She has been in highly cultivated society and it has improved her a great deal, mother. Perhaps if Lucy had had the same opportunity she would have been equally benefited."

"I beg to remind you, John, of what you said about training trees—'the nature of the tree has to be taken into account'; no amount of training could make an oak out of a willow."

"True, mother. Yet there are people who would prefer the willow to the oak."

"And you couldn't help such people, now could you? You might be sorry for them. But there—what could you do?"

And John said softly,

"What can we do o'er whom the unbeholden
Hangs in a night, wherewith we dare not cope;
What but look sunward, and with faces golden,
Speak to each other softly of our Hope?"

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VII

SHOCK AND SORROW

There's not a bonnie flower that springs
By fountain, shaw, or green,
There's not a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me of my Jean.

Only a child of Nature's rarest making,
Wistful and sweet—and with a heart for breaking.

Life is a great school and its lessons go on continually. Now and then perhaps we have a vacation —a period in which all appears to be at rest—but in this very placidity there are often bred the storms that are to trouble and perhaps renew us. For some time after the departure of Harry and his bride, John's life appeared to flow in a smooth but busy routine. Between the mill and Harlow House, he found the days all too short for the love and business with which they were filled. And Mrs. Hatton missed greatly the happy and confidential conversations that had hitherto made her life with her son so intimate and so affectionate.

Early in the spring John began the building of his own home, and this necessarily required some daily attention, especially as he had designs in his

Digitized by Google

mind which were unusual to the local builders, and which seemed to them well worthy of being quietly passed over. For the house was characteristic of the man and the man was not of a common type.

There was nothing small or mean about John's house. The hill on which it stood was the highest ground on the Hatton Manor. It commanded a wide vista of meadows, interspersed with peacefully flowing waters, until the horizon on every hand was closed by ranges of lofty mountains. On this hill the house stood broadly facing the east. It was a large, square Georgian mansion, built of some white stone found in Yorkshire. Its rooms were of extraordinary size and very lofty, their windows being wide and high and numerous. Its corridors were like streets, its stairways broad enough for four people to ascend them abreast. Light, air, space were throughout its distinguishing qualities, and its furnishings were not only very handsome, they had in a special manner that honest size, solidity, and breadth which make English household belongings so comfortable and satisfactory. The grounds were full of handsome forest trees and wonderful grassy glades and just around the house the soil had been enriched and planted with shrubbery and flowers.

Its great proportions in every respect suited both John Hatton and the woman for whom it was built. Both of them appeared to gain a positive majesty of appearance in the splendid reaches of its immense rooms. Certainly they would have dwarfed small

Digitized by Google

people, but John and Jane Hatton were large enough to appropriate and become a part of their surroundings. John felt that he had realized his long, long dream of a modern home, and Jane knew that its spacious, handsome rooms would give to her queenly figure and walk the space and background that was most charming and effective.

In about a year after Harry's marriage it was completely finished and furnished; then John Hatton and Jane Harlow were married in London at Lord Harlow's residence. Harry's invitation did not include his wife, and John explained that it was impossible for him to interfere about the people Lord and Lady Harlow invited to their house or did not invite. "I wish the affair was over," he exclaimed, "for no matter who is there I shall miss you, Harry."

"And Lucy?"

"Yes; but I will tell you what will be far better. Suppose you and Lucy run over to Paris and see the new paintings in the Salon—and all the other sights?"

"I cannot afford it, John."

"The affording is my business. I will find the guineas, Harry. You know that. And Lucy will not have to spend them in useless extravagant dress."

"All right, John! You are a good brother, and you know how to heal a slight."

So John's marriage took place without his

Digitized by Google

brother's presence, and John missed him and had a heartache about it. Subsequently he told his mother so, upon which the Lady of Hatton Manor answered,

"Harry managed very well to do without either mother or brother at his own wedding. You know that, John; and I was none sorry to miss him at yours. When you have to take a person you love with a person you don't love, it is like taking a spoonful of bitterness with a spoonful of jelly after it. I never could tell which spoonful I hated the worst."

After the marriage John and his wife came directly to their own home. John could not leave his mill and his business, and Lord and Lady Harlow considered his resolution a wise proceeding. Jane was also praised for her ready agreement to her husband's business exigencies. But really the omission of the customary wedding-journey gave Jane no disappointment. To take possession of her splendid home, to assume the social distinction it gave her, and to be near to the mother she idolized were three great compensations, superseding abundantly the doubtful pleasures of railway travel and sightseeing.

Jane's mother had caused a pleasant surprise at her daughter's wedding, for the past year's efforts at Harlow House had amply proved Mrs. Harlow's executive abilities in its profitable management; and she was so sure of this future result that she

Digitized by Google

did not hesitate to buy a rich and fashionable wedding-garment or to bring to the light once more the beautiful pearls she had worn at her own bridal. There were indeed few ladies at John's wedding more effectively gowned than his mother-in-law—*except his mother.*

Mrs. Hatton's splendid health set off her splendid beauty, fine carriage, and sumptuous gown of silver-gray brocaded satin, emphasized by sapphires of great luster and value.

"I hevn't worn them since father died, thou knowest," she had said to John the day before the wedding, as she stood before him with the gems in her hands, "but tomorrow he will expect me to wear them both for his sake and thine, thou dear, dear lad!" And she looked up at her son and down at the jewels and her eyes were dim with tears. Presently she continued, "Jane was here this afternoon. I dare say thou art going to the train with her tonight, and may be she will tell thee what she is going to wear. She didn't offer to tell me, and I wouldn't ask her—not I!"

"What for?"

"I thought she happen might be a bit superstitious about talking of her wedding fineries. You can talk the luck out of anything, you know, John."

"Nay, nay, mother!"

"To be sure, you can. *Why-a!* Your father never spoke of any business he wanted to come to a surety, and if I asked him about an offer or a con-

Digitized by Google

tract he would answer, 'Be quiet, Martha, dost ta want to talk it to death?' "

"I will keep mind of that, mother."

"Happen it will be worth thy while to do so."

"Father was a shrewd man."

"Well, then, he left one son able to best him if so inclined."

"You will look most handsome, mother. I shall be proud of you. There will be none like you at the London house."

"I think that is likely, John. Jane's mother will look middling well, but I shall be a bit beyond her. She showed me her gown, and her pearls. They were not bad, but they might hev been better—so they might!"

It was thus John Hatton's marriage came off. There was a dull, chill service in St. Margaret's, every word of which was sacred to John, a gay wedding-breakfast, and a laughing crowd from whom the bride and bridegroom stole away, reaching their own home late in the afternoon. They were as quiet there as if they had gone into a wilderness. Mrs. Hatton remained in London for two weeks, with an old school companion, and Mrs. Harlow was hospitably entertained by Lord and Lady Harlow, who thoroughly respected her successful efforts to turn Harlow House into more than a respectable living.

Perhaps she was a little proud of her work, and a little tiresome in explaining her methods, but that

Digitized by Google

was a transient trial to be easily looked over, seeing that its infliction was limited to a short period. On the whole she was praised and pleased, and she told Mrs. Hatton when they met again, that it was the first time her noble brother-in-law had ever treated her with kindness and respect.

So the days grew to months, and the months to more than four years, and the world believed that all was prosperous with the Hattons. Perhaps in Harry Hatton's case expectations had been a little bettered by realities. At least in a great measure he had realized the things he had so passionately desired when he resigned his share in the mill and gave life up to love, music, and painting. He certainly possessed one of those wonderful West Riding voices, whose power and sweetness leaves an abiding echo in memory. And in London he had found such good teachers and good opportunities that John was now constantly receiving programs of musical entertainments in which Harry Hatton had a prominent part. Indeed, John had gone specially to the last Leeds musical event, and had been greatly delighted with the part assigned Harry and the way in which he rendered it.

Afterwards he described to Harry's mother the popularity of her son. "Why, mother," he said, "the big audience were most enthusiastic when Harry stepped forward. He looked so handsome and his smile and bearing were so charming, that you could not wonder the people broke into cheers

Digitized by Google

and bravos. I was as enthusiastic as anyone present. And he sang, yes, he sang like an angel. Upon my word, mother, one could not expect a soul who had such music in it to be silent."

"I'm sure I don't know where he got the music. His father never sang a note that I know of, and though I could sing a cradle song when a crying child needed it, nobody ever offered me money to do it; and your father has said more than often when so singing, *'Be quiet, Martha!'* So his father and mother did not give Harry Hatton any such foolish notions and ways."

"Every good gift is from God, mother, and we ought not to belittle them, ought we, now?"

"I'm sure I don't know, John. I've been brought up with cotton-spinners, and it is little they praise, if it be not good yarns and warps and wefts and big factories with high, high chimneys."

"Well, then, cotton-spinners are mostly very fine singers. You know that, mother."

"To be sure, but they don't make a business of singing, not they, indeed! They work while they sing. But to see a strapping young man in evening dress or in some other queer make of clothes, step forward before a crowd and throw about his arms and throw up his eyes and sing like nothing that was ever heard in church or chapel is a stunningly silly sight, John. I saw and heard a lot of such rubbishy singing and dressing when I was in London."

"Still, I think we ought to be proud of Harry."

Digitized by Google

"Such nonsense! I'm more than a bit ashamed of him. I am that! You can't respect people who *amuse* you, like you do men who put their hands to the world's daily work. No, you can not, John. I would have been better suited if Harry had stuck to his painting business. He could have done that in his own house, shut up and quiet like; but when I was in London I saw pictures of Henry Hatton, of our Harry, mind ye, singing in all makes and manners of fool dresses. I hope to goodness his father does not know a Hatton man is exhibiting himself to gentle and simple in such disreputable clothes. I have been wondering your father hasn't been to see me about it."

"To see you, mother?"

"To be sure. If there's anything wrong at Hatton, he generally comes and gives me his mind on the same."

"You mean that you dream he does?"

"You may as well call it 'dreaming' as anything else. The name you give it doesn't matter, does it?"

"Not much, mother. I brought home with me two of Harry's paintings. They are fine copies of famous pictures. I gave him fifty pounds for them and thought them cheap at that."

"Well, then, if I was buying Harry's work, I would not count on its cheapness. I'll be bound that you bought them as an excuse for giving him money. I would buy or give away, one or the other.

Digitized by Google

I hate make-believes—I do that!—of all kinds and for all reasons, good or bad."

"There was nothing like pretending in the transaction, mother. The pictures were good, I paid their value and no more or less, because they were only copies. Harry's technique is perfect, and his feeling about color and atmosphere wonderful, but he cannot create a picture. He has not the imagination. I am sorry for it."

"Be sorry if you like, John. I have a poor opinion of imagination, except in religious matters. However, Harry has chosen his own way: I don't approve of it. I won't praise him, and I won't quarrel with him. You can do as you like. One thing is sure—he is more than good enough for the girl he married."

"He is very fond of her and I do believe she keeps Harry straight. He does just as she thinks best about most things."

"Does he? Then he ought to be ashamed of himself to take orders from her. Many times he sneaked round my orders and even his father's, and then to humble a Hatton to obey the orders of a poor Welsh girl! It's a crying shame! It angers me, John! It would anger anyone, it would. You can't say different, John."

"Yes, I can, mother. I assure you that Lucy is just the wife Harry needs. And they have two fine little lads. I wish the eldest—called Stephen after my father—was my own son. I do that!"

Digitized by Google

"Nay, my dear. There's no need for such a wish. There are sons and daughters for Hatton, no doubt of that. Thy little Martha is very dear to my heart."

"To mine also, mother."

"Then be thankful—and patient. I'm going upstairs to get a letter I want posted. Will you take it to the mail for me?"

Then Mrs. Hatton left the room and John looked wistfully after her. "It is always so," he thought. "If I name children, she goes. What does it mean?"

He looked inquiringly into his mother's face when she returned and she smiled cheerfully back, but it was with the face of an angry woman she watched him to the gate, muttering words she would not have spoken had there been anyone to hear them nearby. And John's attitude was one of uncertain trouble. He carried himself intentionally with a lofty bearing, but in spite of all his efforts to appear beyond care, he was evidently in the grip of some unknown sorrow.

That it was unknown was in a large degree the core of his anxiety. He had noticed for a long time that his mother was apparently very unsympathetic when his wife was suffering from violent attacks of sickness which made her physician tread softly and look grave, and that even Jane's mother, though she nursed her daughter carefully, was reticent and exceedingly nervous. *What could it mean?*

Digitized by Google

He had just passed through an experience of this kind, and as he thought of Jane and her suffering the hurry of anxious love made him quicken his steps and he went rapidly home, so rapidly that he forgot the letter with which he had been intrusted. He knew by the light in Jane's room that she was awake and he hastened there. She was evidently watching and listening for his coming, for as soon as the door was partly open, she half-rose from the couch on which she was lying and stretched out her arms to him.

In an instant he was kneeling at her side. "My darling," he whispered. "My darling! Are you better?"

"I am quite out of pain, John, only a little weak. In a few days I shall be all right." But John, looking into the white face that had once been so radiant, only faintly admitted the promise of a few days putting all right.

"I have been lonely today dear, so lonely! My mother did not come, and Mother Hatton has not even sent to ask whether I was alive or dead."

"Yet she is very unhappy about your condition. Jane, my darling Jane! What is it that induces these attacks? Does your medical man know?"

"If so, he does not tell me. I am a little to blame this time, John. On the afternoon I was taken sick, I went in the carriage to the village. I ought not to have gone. I was far from feeling well, and as soon as I reached the market-house, I met two men

Digitized by Google

helping a wounded girl to the hospital. Do you remember, John?"

"I remember. Her hand was caught in some machinery and torn a good deal. I sent the men with her to the village."

"While I was speaking to her, Mrs. Mark Levy drove up. She insisted on taking what she called 'the poor victim' to the hospital in her carriage; and before I could interfere the two men lifted the girl into Mrs. Levy's carriage and they were off like lightning without a word to me. I was so angry. I turned sick and faint and was obliged to come home as quickly as possible and send for Dr. Sewell."

"O Jane! Why did you care?"

"I was shocked by that woman's interference."

"She meant it kindly. I suppose——"

"But what right had she to meddle with your hands? If the girl required to be taken in a carriage to the hospital, there was my carriage. I think that incident helped to make me sick."

"You should have lifted the injured girl at once, Jane, and then Mrs. Levy would have had no opportunity to take your place."

"She is such an interfering woman. Her fingers are in everyone's way and really, John, she has got the charitable affairs of Hatton town in her hands. The girls' clubs rely on her for everything, and she gives without any consideration, John. How much is her husband worth? Is he very rich? She ap-

Digitized by Google

pears to have no end of money—and John, dear, she is always in my way. I don't know how she manages it, but she is. I wish you would get them out of our town, dear."

"I cannot, Jane. Levy is a large property-owner. He is not indigent. He is not lazy. He is not in any way immoral. He has become a large taxpayer, and has of late political aspirations. He annoys me frequently, but money is now everything. And he has money—plenty of it. Until he came, we were the richest family in Hatton. Father and I have really built Hatton. We have spent thousands of pounds in making it a model community, but we have received little gratitude. I think, Jane, that men have more respect for those who *make* money, than for those who *give it away.*"

"You don't like Mr. Levy, do you, John?"

"He annoys me very frequently. It is not easy to like people who do that."

"His wife annoys me. Cannot we make up some plan to put them down a peg or two?"

"We can do nothing against them, my dear."

"Why, John?"

"Because 'God beholdeth mischief and spite to requite it.' And after all, these Levys are only trying to win public respect and that by perfectly honorable means. True they are pushing, but no one can push Yorkshire men and women beyond their own opinions and their own interests. In the meantime, they are helpful to the town."

Digitized by Google

"Mrs. Swale, of Woodleigh, told me she had heard that Mrs. Levy came from the Lake District and is a Christian. Do you believe that, John?"

"Not for a minute. Mr. Levy is a Hebrew of long and honorable descent. His family came from Spain to England in the time of Henry the Seventh. Such Jews never marry Christian women. I do not believe either love or money could make them do it. I have no doubt that Mrs. Levy has a family record as ancient and as honorable as her husband's. She is a kind-hearted woman and really handsome. She has four beautiful sons. I tell you, Jane, when she stands in the midst of them she is a sight worth looking at."

Jane laughed scornfully, and Jane's husband continued with decided emotion, "Yes, indeed, when you see Mrs. Levy with her four sons you see a woman in her noblest attribute. You see her as *the mother of men.*"

"What is Mr. Levy's business? Who knows?"

"Everyone in Hatton knows that he is an importer of Spanish wines and fine tobaccos."

"Oh! The ladies generally thought he was a money lender."

"He may be—it is not unlikely."

"Mrs. Swale said so."

"I dare say Mrs. Swale's husband knows."

"Well, John, the Levys cannot touch me. The Harlows have been in Yorkshire before the Romans

Digitized by Google

came and my family is not only old, it is noble, or John Hatton would not have married me."

"John Hatton would have married you if you had been a beggar-maid. There is no woman in the world to him, but his own sweet Jane." Then Jane took his hands and kissed them, and there was a few moments of most eloquent silence—a silence just touched with happy tears.

John spoke first. "Jane, my darling," he said, "do you think a few months in the south would do you good? If you could lie out in the warm breeze and the sunshine—if you were free of all these little social worries—if you took your mother with you —if you——"

"John, my dear one, I have an invitation from Lady Harlow to spend a few weeks with her. Surrey is much warmer than Yorkshire. I might go there."

"Yes," answered John, but his voice was reluctant and dissenting, and in a few moments he said, "There is little Martha—could you take her with you?"

"Oh dear me! What would be the good of my going away to rest, if I drag a child with me? You know Martha is spoiled and wilful."

"Is she? I am sorry to hear that. She would, however, have her maid, and she is now nearly three years old."

"It would be useless for me to go away, unless I go alone. I suggested Surrey because I thought you could come to see me every Saturday."

Digitized by Google

The little compliment pleased John, and he answered, "You shall do just as you wish, darling! I would give up everything to see you look as you used to look."

"You are always harping on that one string, John. It is only four years since we were married. Have I become an old woman in four years?"

"No, but you have become a sick woman. I want you to be well and strong."

Then she lay back on her pillows, and as she closed her eyes some quick, hot tears were on her white face, and John kissed them away, and with a troubled heart, uncertain and unhappy, he bid her good night.

Nothing in the interview had comforted or enlightened him, but there was that measure of the Divine spirit in John Hatton, which enabled him to *rise above* what he could not *go through*. He had found even from his boyhood that for the chasms of life wings had been provided and that he could mount heaven-high by such help and bring back strength for every hour of need. And he was comforted by the word that came to him, and he fell asleep to the little antiphony he held with his own soul:

O Lord how happy is the time—

. . . .

When from my weariness I climb,
Close to thy tender breast.

. . . .

Digitized by Google

For there abides a peace of Thine,
Man did not make, and cannot mar.

. . . .

Perfect I call Thy plan,
I trust what Thou shalt do.

And in some way and through some intelligence he was counseled as he slept, in two words—*Mark Sewell.* And he wondered that he had not thought of his wife's physician before. Yet there was little need to wonder. He was always at the mill when Doctor Sewell paid his visit, and he took simply and reliably whatever Mrs. Harlow and Jane confided to him. But when he awoke in the misty daylight, the echo of the two words he had heard was still clear and positive in his mind; consequently he went as soon as possible to Dr. Sewell's office.

The Doctor met him as if he was an expected client. "You are come at last, Hatton," he said. "I have been expecting you for a long time."

"Then you know what instruction I have come for?"

"I should say I do."

"What is the matter with my wife's health?"

"I ought to send you to her for that information. She can tell you better than I can."

"Sewell, what do you mean? Speak straight."

"Hatton, there are some women who love children and who will even risk social honor for maternity. There are other women who hate mother-

Digitized by Google

hood and who will constantly risk suicide rather than permit it. Mrs. Hatton belongs to the latter class."

John was stupefied at these words. He could only look into the Doctor's face and try to assimilate their meaning. For they fell upon his ears as if each syllable was a blow and he could not gather them together.

"My wife! Jane—do you mean?" and he looked helplessly at Sewell and it was some minutes before John could continue the conversation or rather listen to Sewell who then sat down beside him and taking his hand in his own said,

"Do not speak, Hatton. I will talk for you. I should have spoken long ago, but I knew not whether you—you—forgive me, Hatton, but there are such men. If I have slandered you in my thought, if I have done you this great wrong——"

"Oh Doctor, the hope and despair of my married life has been—the longing for my sons and daughters."

"Poor lad! And thee so good and kind to every little one, that comes in thy way. It is too bad, it is that. By heaven, I am thankful to be an old bachelor! Thou must try and understand, John, that women are never the same, and yet that in some great matters, what creation saw them, they are today. Their endless variety and their eternal similarity are what charm men. In the days of the patriarchs there were women who would not have children, and there were women also who longed and prayed

Digitized by Google

for them, even as Hannah did. It is just that way today. Their reasons then and their reasons now may be different but both are equally powerful."

"I never heard tell of such women! Never!"

"They were not likely to come thy road. Thou wert long in taking a wife, and when thou did so it was unfortunate thou took one bred up in the way she should *not* go. I know women who are slowly killing themselves by inducing unnatural diseases through the denial and crucifixion of Nature. Thy own wife is one of them. That she hes not managed the business is solely because she has a superabundance of vitality and a perfect constitution. Physically, Nature intended her for a perfect mother, but—but she cannot go on as she is doing. I have told her so—as plainly as I knew how. Now I tell thee. Such ways cannot go on."

"They will be stopped—at once—this day—this hour."

"Nay, nay. She is still very weak and nervous."

"She wants to go to London."

"Let her go."

"But I must speak to her before she goes."

"In a few days."

"Sewell, I thank you. I know now what I have to meet. It is the grief *not sure* that slays hope in a man."

"To be sure. Does Mrs. Stephen Hatton know of your wife's practices?"

"No. I will stake my honor on that. She may

Digitized by Google

suspect her, but if she was certain she would have spoken to me."

"Then it is her own mother, and most likely to be so."

It was noon before John reached Hatton mill. He had received a shock which left him far below his usual condition, and yet feeling so cruelly hurt and injured that it was difficult to obey the physician's request to keep his trouble to himself for a few days.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER VIII

THE GODDESS OF THE TENDER FEET

The goddess Calamity is delicate . . . her feet are tender. Her feet are soft, for she treads not upon the ground, she makes her path upon the hearts of men.—PINDAR.

Animosities perish, the humanities are eternal.

One morning, nearly a week after his interview with Dr. Sewell, John found Jane in her room surrounded by fine clothing and trunks and evidently well enough to consider what he had to say to her.

"What are you doing, Jane?" he asked.

"Why, John, I am sorting out the dresses that are nice enough for London. I think I shall be well enough to go to Aunt Harlow next week."

"I wish you would come to my room. I want to speak to you."

"Your room is such a bare, chilly place, John."

"It is secluded and we must have no listener to what I am going to say to you."

Jane looked up quickly and anxiously, asking, "Are you in trouble, John?"

"Yes, in great trouble."

"About money?"

Digitized by Google

"Worse than that."

"Then it is that tiresome creature, Harry."

"No. It is yourself."

"Oh, indeed; I think you had better look for someone else to quarrel with."

"I have no quarrel with anyone; I have something to say to you, and to you, only; but there are always servants in and out of your rooms."

She rose reluctantly, saying as she did so, "If I get cold, it makes no matter, I suppose."

"Everything about you is of the greatest importance to me, I suppose you know that."

"It may be so or it may not be so. You have scarcely noticed me for nearly a week. I am going to London. There, I hope, I shall receive a little more love and attention."

"But you are not going to London."

"I am going to London. I have written to Lady Harlow saying I would be with her on next Monday evening."

"Write to Lady Harlow at once and tell her you will not be able to leave home."

"That is no excuse for breaking my word."

"Tell her I, your husband, need you here. No other excuse is necessary."

Jane laughed as if she was highly amused. "Does 'I, my husband,' expect Lady Harlow and Jane Hatton to change their plans for his whim?"

"Not for any whim of mine, Jane, would I ask you to change your plans. I have heard something

Digitized by Google

which will compel me to pay more attention to you."

"Goodness knows, I am thankful for that! During my late illness, I think you were exceedingly negligent."

"Why did you make yourself so ill? Tell me that."

"Such a preposterous question!" she replied, but she was startled and frightened by it and more so by the anger in John's face and voice. In a moment the truth flashed upon her consciousness and it roused just as quickly an intense contradiction and a willful determination not only to stand her ground but to justify her position.

"If this is your catechism, John, I have not yet learned it."

"Sit down, Jane. You must tell me the truth if it takes all the day. You had better sit down."

Then she threw herself into the large easy chair he pushed towards her; for she felt strangely weak and trembling and John's sorrowful, angry manner terrified her.

"Jane," he said, "I have heard to my great grief and shame that it is your fault we have no more children."

"I think Martha is one too many." At the moment she uttered these words she was sorry. She did not mean them. She had only intended to annoy John.

And John cried out, "Good God, Jane. Do you

Digitized by Google

know what you are saying? Suppose God should take the dear one from us this night."

"I do not suppose things about God. I do not think it is right to inquire as to what He may do."

"Jane, it is useless to twist my question into another meaning. Suppose you had not destroyed our other children before they saw the light?"

"John," she cried, "how dare you say such dreadful things to me? I will not listen to you. Open the door. You might well put the key in your pocket —and I have been so ill. I have suffered so much —it is dreadful"—and she fell into a fit of hysterical weeping.

John waited patiently until she had sobbed herself quiet, then he continued, "When I think of my sons or daughters, *written down in God's Book* and blotted out by *you*."

"I will not listen. You are mad. Your 'sons or daughters' could not be hurt by anyone before they had life."

"They always had life. Before the sea was made or the mountains were brought forth,

> 'Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,
> God thought on *me* his child,'

and on *you* and on *every soul* made for immortality by the growth that fresh birth gives it. He loves us with an everlasting love. No false mother can

Digitized by Google

destroy a child's soul, but she can destroy its flesh and so retard and interfere with its eternal growth. This is the great sin—the sin of blood-guiltiness—any woman may commit it."

"You talk sheer nonsense, John. I do not believe anything you say."

Then John went to a large Bible lying open on a table. "Listen, then," he said, "to the Word of God"; and with intense solemnity he read aloud to her the wonderful verses in the one-hundred-and-thirty-ninth Psalm, between the twelfth and seventeenth, laying particular stress on the sixteenth verse, " 'Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them.' So then Jane, dear Jane, you see from the very, very first, when as yet no member of the child had been formed it was *written down in God's Book* as a man or a woman yet to be. All souls so written down, are the children of the Most High. It was not only yourself and me you were wronging, Jane, you were sinning against the Father and lover of souls, for we are all 'the children of the most High.' "

But Jane was apparently unmoved. "I am tired," she said wearily. "I want to go to my room."

"I have other things to say to you, most important things. Will you come here this evening after dinner?"

"No, I will not. I am going to see mother."

Digitized by Google

"Call at Hatton House as you come back, and I will meet you there."

"I shall not come back today. I feel ill—and no wonder."

"When will you return?"

"I don't know. I tell you I feel ill."

"Then you had better not go to Harlow House."

"Where else should a woman go in trouble but to her mother? When her heart is breaking, then she knows that the nest of all nests is her mother's breast."

John wanted to tell her that God and a loving husband might and surely would help her, but when she raised her lovely, sad eyes brimming with tears and he saw how white and full of suffering her face was, he could not find in his heart to dispute her words. For he suffered in seeing her suffer far more than she could understand.

At her own room door he left her and his heart was so heavy he could not go to the mill. He could not think of gold and cotton while there was such an abyss between him and his wife. Truly she had wronged and wounded him in an intolerable manner, but his great love could look beyond the wrong to her repentance and to his forgiveness.

Walking restlessly about his room or lost in sorrowful broodings an hour passed, and then he began to tell himself that he must not for the indulgence of even his great grief desert his lawful work. If things went wrong at the mill, because of his ab-

Digitized by Google

sence, and gain was lost for his delay, he would be wronging many more than John Hatton. Come what might to him personally, he was bound by his father's, as well as his own, promise to be "diligent in business, serving the Lord." That was the main article of Hatton's contract with the God they served—the poor, the sick, the little children whom no one loved, he could not wrong them because he was in trouble with his wife.

Such thoughts came over him like a flood and he instantly rose up to answer them. In half an hour he was at his desk, and there he lost the bitterness of his grief in his daily work. *Work,* the panacea for all sorrow, the oldest gospel preached to men! And because his soul was fit for the sunshine it followed him, and the men who only met him among the looms went for the rest of the day with their heads up and a smile on their faces, so great is the strengthening quality in the mere presence of a man of God, going about his daily business in the spirit of God.

He found no wife to meet him at the end of the day. Jane had gone to Harlow House and taken her maid and a trunk with her. He made no remark. What wise thing could he do but quietly bear an evil that was past cure and put a good face on it? He did not know whether or not Jane had observed the same reticence, but he quickly reflected that no good could come from servants discussing what they knew nothing about.

Digitized by Google

However, when Jane did not return or send him any message, the following day his anxiety was so great that he called on Dr. Sewell in the evening and asked if he could tell him of his wife's condition.

"I was sent for this morning to Harlow House," he answered.

"Is she ill—worse?"

"No. She is fretting. She ought to fret. I gave her some soothing medicine. I am not sure I did right."

"O Sewell, what shall I do?"

"Go to Madame Hatton. She is a good, wise woman. She is not in love with her daughter-in-law, but she is as just as women ever are. She will give you far better counsel than a mere man can offer you."

So late as it was, John rode up to Hatton Hall. It had begun to rain but he heeded not any physical discomfort. Still he had a pleasant feeling when he saw the blaze of Hatton hearthfire brightening the dark shadows of the dripping trees. And he suddenly sent his boyish "hello" before him, so it was Mrs. Hatton herself who opened the big hall door, who stood in the glow of the hall lamp to welcome him, and who between laughing and scolding sent him to his old room to change his wet clothing.

He came back to her with a smile and a dry coat, saying, "Dear mother, you keep all the same up-

Digitized by Google

stairs. There isn't pin nor paper moved since I left my room."

"Of course I keep all the same. I would feel very lonely if I hadn't thy room and Harry's to look into. They are not always empty. Sometimes I feel as if you might be there, and Oh but I am happy, when I do so! I just say a 'good morning' or a 'good night' and shut the door. It is a queer thing, John."

"What is queer, mother?"

"That feeling of 'presence.' But whatever brings thee here at this time of night? and it raining, too, as if there was an ark to float!"

"Well, mother, there is in a way. I am in trouble."

"I was fearing it."

"Why?"

"I heard tell that Jane was at Harlow. What is she doing there, my dear?"

"Dr. Sewell told me something about Jane."

"Oh! He told you at last, did he! He ought to have told you long ago."

"Has he known it a long time?"

"He has—if he knows anything."

"And you—mother?"

"I was not sure as long as he kept quiet, and hummed and ha'ed about it. But I said enough to Jane on two occasions to let her know I suspected treachery both to her own life and soul and to thee."

"And to my unborn children, mother."

Digitized by Google

"To be sure. It is a sin and a shame, both ways. It is that! The last time she was here, she told me as a bit of news, that Mary Fairfax had died that morning of cancer, and I said, 'Not she. She killed herself.' Then Jane said, 'You are mistaken, mother, she died of cancer.' I replied a bit hotly, 'She gave herself cancer. I have no doubt of that, and so she died as she deserved to die.' And when Jane said, 'No one could give herself cancer,' I told her plain and square that she did it by refusing the children God sent her to bear and to bring up for Him, taking as a result the pangs of cancer. She knew very well what I meant."

"What did she say?"

"Not a word. She was too angry to speak wisely and wise enough not to speak at all."

"Well, mother?"

"I said much more of the same kind. I told her that no one ever abused Nature and got off scot-free. *'Why-a!'* I said, 'it is thus and so in the simplest matters. If you or I eat too much we have a sick headache or dyspepsia. If you dance or ride too much your heart suffers, and you know what happened to Abram Bowles with drinking too much. It is much worse,' I went on, 'if a tie is broken it is death to one or the other or both, especially if it is done again and again. Nature maltreated will send in her bill. That is sure as life and death, and the longer it is delayed, the heavier the bill.' I went on and told her that Mary Fairfax had been

Digitized by Google

married seventeen years and had never borne but one child. She had long credit, I said, but Nature sent in her bill at last, and Mary had it to settle. Now, John, I did my duty, didn't I?"

"You did, mother. What did Jane say?"

"She said women had a hard lot to endure. She said they were born slaves and died slaves and a good deal more of the same kind of talk. I told her in reply that women were sent into life *to give life,* to be, as thou said, *mothers of men,* and she laughed, a queer kind of laugh though. Then I added, 'You may like the reason or not, Jane. You may accept or defy it, but I tell you plainly, motherhood was and is and always will be the chief reason and end of womanhood.' "

"Well, mother?"

"She was unpleasant and sarcastic and said this and that for pure aggravation about the selfishness of men. So our cup of tea was a bit bitter, and as a last fling she said my muffins were soggy and she would send me her mother's receipt. And I have been making muffins for thirty years, John!"

"I am astonished at Jane. She is usually so careful not to hurt or offend."

"Well, she forgets once in a while. I had the best of the argument, for I had only to remind her that it was I who taught her mother how to make muffins and who gave her my receipt for the same. Then she said, 'Really,' and, 'It is late, I must go!' And go she did and I have not seen her since."

Digitized by Google

"I wish I knew what to do, mother."

"Go to thy bed now and try to sleep. This thing is beyond thy ordering or mending. Leave it to those who are wiser than thou art. It will be put right at the right time by them. And don't meddle with it rashly. Every step thou takes is like stirring in muddy water—every step makes it muddier."

"But I must go to Harlow and see Jane if she does not come home."

"Thou must not go a step on that road. If thou does, thou may go on stepping it time without end. She left thee of her own free will. Let her come back in the same way. She is wrong. If thou wert wrong, I would tell thee so. Yes, I would be the first to bid thee go to Harlow and say thou wanted to be forgiven and loved again."

"I believe that, mother."

"By the Word of Christ, I would!"

"I shall be utterly unhappy if I do not know that she is well."

"Ask Sewell. If she is sick he will know and he will tell thee the truth. Go now and sleep. Thy pillow may give thee comfort and wisdom."

"Your advice is always right, mother. I will take it."

"Thou art a good man, John, and all that comes to thee shall be good in the fullness of its time and necessity. Kiss me, thou dear lad! I am proud to be thy mother. It is honor enough for Martha Hatton!"

Digitized by Google

That night John slept sorrowfully and he had the awakening from such a sleep—the slow, yet sudden realization of his trouble finding him out. It entered his consciousness with the force of a knock-down blow; he could hardly stand up against it. Usually he sang or whistled as he dressed himself, and this was so much a habit of his nature that it passed without notice in his household. Once, indeed, his father had fretfully alluded to it, saying, "Singing out of time is always singing out of tune," and Mrs. Hatton had promptly answered,

"Keep thyself to thyself, Stephen. Singing beats grumbling all to pieces. Give me the man who *can* sing at six o'clock in the morning. He is worth trusting and loving, I'll warrant that. I wish thou would sing thyself. Happen it might sweeten thee a bit." And Stephen Hatton had kept himself to himself, about John's early singing thereafter.

This morning there was no song in John's heart and no song on his lips. He dressed silently and rapidly as if he was in a hurry to do something and yet he did not know what to do. His mother's positive assertion, that the best way out of the difficulty was to let it solve itself, did not satisfy him. He wanted to see his wife. He knew he must say some plain, hard words to her; but she loved him, and she would surely listen and understand how hard it was for him to say them.

He went early to the mill. He hoped there might be a letter there for him. When he found none

Digitized by Google

among his mail, he hurried back to his home. "Jane would send her letter there," he thought. But there was no letter there. Then his heart sank within him, but he took no further step at that hour. Business from hundreds of looms called him. Hundreds of workers were busy among them. Greenwood was watching for him. Clerks were waiting for his directions and the great House of Labor shouted from all its myriad windows.

With a pitiful and involuntary "God help me!" he buckled himself to his mail. It was larger than ordinary, but he went with exact and patient care over it. He said to himself, "Troubles love to flock together and I expect I shall find a worrying letter from Harry this morning"; but there was no letter at all from Harry and he felt relieved. The only personal note that came to him was a request that he would not fail to be present at the meeting of the Gentlemen's Club that evening, as there was important business to transact.

He sat with this message in his hand, considering. He had for some time felt uneasy about his continuance in the Club, for its social regulations were strict and limited. Composed mostly of the landed gentry in the neighborhood, it had very slowly and reluctantly opened its doors to a few of the most wealthy manufacturers, and Harry's appearance as a public and professional singer negatived his right to its exclusive membership. In case Harry was asked to resign, John would certainly

Digitized by Google

withdraw with his brother. Yet the mere thought of such a social humiliation troubled him.

When the mail was attended to he rose quickly, shook himself, as if he would shake off the trouble that oppressed him, and went through the mill with Greenwood. This duty he performed with such minute attention that the overseer privately wondered whatever was the matter with "Master John," but soon settled the question, by a decision that "he hed been worried by his wife a bit, and it hed put him all out of gear, and no wonder." For Greenwood had had his own experiences of this kind and had suffered many things in consequence of them. So he was sorry for John as he told himself that "whether married men were rich or poor, things were pretty equal for them."

Just as the two men parted, Jonathan said, in a kind of afterthought way, "There's a full meeting of the Gentlemen's Club tonight, sir. I suppose you know."

"Certainly, but how is it *you* know?"

"You may well ask that, sir. I am truly nobbut one o' John Hatton's overseers, but I hev a son who has married into a landed family, and he told me that some of the old quality were going to propose his father-in-law for membership tonight. I promised my Ben I would ask your vote in Master Akers' favor."

"Akers has bought a deal of land lately, I hear."

"Most of the old Akers' Manor back, and there

Digitized by Google

are those who think he ought to be recognized. I hope you will give him a ball of the right color, sir."

"Greenwood, I am not well acquainted with Israel Akers. I see him at the market dinner occasionally, but——"

"Think of it, sir. It is mebbe right to believe in a man until you find out he isn't worthy of trust."

"That is quite contrary to your usual advice, Greenwood."

"*Privately,* sir, I am a very trusting man. That is my nature—but in business it is different—trusting doesn't work in business, sir. You know that, sir."

John nodded an assent, and said, "Look after loom forty, Greenwood. It was idle. Find out the reason. As to Akers, I shall do the kind and just thing, you may rest on that. Is he a pleasant man personally?"

"I dare say he is pleasant enough at a dinner-table, and I'll allow that he is varry unpleasant at a piece table in the Town Hall. But webs of stuff and pieces of cloth naturally lock up a man's best self. He wouldn't hev got back to be Akers of Akerside if things wern't that way ordered."

This Club news troubled John. He did not believe that Akers cared a penny piece for a membership, and pooh-pooh it as he would, this trifling affair would not let him alone. It gnawed under the great sorrow of Jane's absence, like a rat gnawing under his bed or chair.

Digitized by Google

But come what will, time and the hour run through the hardest day; the looms suddenly stopped, the mill was locked, the crowd of workers scattered silently and wearily, and John rode home with a sick sense of sorrow at his heart. He had no hope that Jane would be there. He knew the dear, proud woman too well to expect from her such an impossible submission. Tears sprang to his eyes as he thought of her, and yet there was set before him an inexorable duty which he dared not ignore, for the things of Eternity rested on it.

He left his horse at the stable and walked slowly round to the front of the house. As he reached the door it was swiftly opened, and in smiles and radiant raiment Jane stood waiting to receive him.

"John! John, dear!" she said softly, and he took her in his arms and whispered her name over and over on her lips.

"Dinner will be ready in half an hour," she said, "and it is the dinner you like best of all. Do not loiter, John."

He shook his head happily and took the broad low steps as a boy might—two or three at a time. Everything now seemed possible to him. "She is in an angel's temper," he thought. "She has divined between the wrong and the right. She will throw the wrong over forever."

And Jane watched him up the stairs with womanly pleasure. She said to herself, "How handsome he is! How good he is! There are none like him."

Digitized by Google

Then her face clouded, and she went into the parlor and sat down. She knew there was a trying conversation before her, but, "John cannot resist the argument of my beauty," she thought. "It is sure to prevail." In a few moments she continued her reflections. "I may be weak enough to give a promise for the future, but I will never, never, admit I was wrong in the past. Make your stand there, Jane Hatton, for if he ever thinks you did wrong knowingly, you will lose all your influence over him."

During dinner and while the butler was in the room the conversation was kept upon general subjects, and John in this interval spoke of Akers' wish to join the Gentlemen's Club.

"I am not astonished," answered Jane. "Mrs. Will Clough and her daughter arrived in my Club a year ago. They are very pushing and what they call 'advanced.' They do not believe that the earth is the Lord's nor yet that it belongs to man. They think it is woman's own heritage. And they want the name of the Club changed. It has always been the Society Club. Mrs. William Clough thinks a society club is shockingly behind the times; and she proposed changing it to the Progressive Club. She said we were all, she hoped, progressive women."

"Well, Jane, my dear, this is interesting. What next?"

"Mrs. Israel Akers said she had been told that 'very few of the old-fashioned women were left in

Digitized by Google

Hatton, that even the women in the mills were progressing and getting nearer and nearer to the modern ideal'; and she added in a plaintive voice, 'I'm a good bit past seventy, and I hope some old-fashioned women will live as long as I do, that we may be company for each other.' Mrs. Clough told her, 'she would soon learn to love the new woman,' and she said plain out, 'Nay not I! I can't understand her, and I doan't know what she means.' Then Mrs. Brierly spoke of the 'old woman' as a down-trodden 'creature' not to be put in comparison with the splendid 'new woman' who was beginning to arrive. I'm sure, John, it puzzles me."

"I can only say, Jane, that the 'old woman' has filled her position for millenniums with honor and affection, almost with adoration. I would not like to say what will be the result of her taking to men's ways and men's work."

"You know, John, you cannot judge one kind of woman from the other kind. They are so entirely different. Women have been kept so ignorant. Now they place culture and knowledge before everything."

"Surely not before love, Jane?"

"Yes, indeed! Some put knowledge and progress —always progress—before everything else."

"My dear Jane, think of this—all we call 'progress' ends with death. What is that progress worth which is bounded by the grave? If progress in men and women is not united with faith in God, and

Digitized by Google

hope in His eternal life and love, I would not lift my hand or speak one word to help either man or woman to such blank misery."

"Do not put yourself out of the way, John. There will be no change in the women of today that will affect you. But no doubt they will eventually halve —and better halve—the world's work and honors with men. Do you not think so, John?"

"My dear, I know not; women perhaps may cease to be women; but I am positive that men will continue to be men."

"I mean that women will do men's work as well as men do it."

"Nature is an obstinate dame. She offers serious opposition to that result."

"Well, I was only telling you how far progressive ideas had grown in Hatton town. Women propose to share with men the honors of statecraft and the wealth of trading and manufacturing."

"Jane, dear, I don't like to hear you talking such nonsense. The mere fact that women *can not fight* affects all the unhappy equality they aim at; and if it were possible to alter that fact, we should be equalizing *down* and not up." Then he looked at his watch and said he must be at the Club very soon.

"Will you remain in the parlor until I return, Jane?" he asked. "I will come home as quickly as possible."

"No, John, I find it is better for me to go to

Digitized by Google

sleep early. Indeed, as you are leaving me, I will go to my room now. Good night, dear!"

He said good night but his voice was cold, and his heart anxious and dissatisfied. And after Jane had left the room he sat down again, irresolute and miserable. "Why should I go to the Club?" he asked himself. "Why should I care about its small ways and regulations? I have something far more important to think of. I will not go out tonight."

He sat still thinking for half an hour, then he looked again at his watch and found that it was yet possible to be at the Club in time. So with a great sigh he obeyed that urging of duty, which even in society matters he could not neglect and be at rest.

There was no light in Jane's room when he returned home and he spent the night miserably. Waking he felt as if walking through the valley of the shadows of loss and intolerable wrong. Phantoms created by his own sorrow and fear pressed him hard and dreams from incalculable depths troubled and terrified his soul. In sleep it was no better. He was then the prisoner of darkness, fettered with the bonds of a long night and exiled for a space from the eternal Providence.

At length, however, the sun rose and John awoke and brought the terror to an end by the calling on One Name and by casting himself on the care and mercy of that One, who is "a very present help in time of trouble." That was all John needed. He

Digitized by Google

did not expect to escape trouble. All he asked was that God would be to him "a very present help" in it.

Slowly and thoughtfully he dressed, wondering the while from what depths of awful and forgotten experiences such dreams came. He was yet awe-struck and his spirit quailed when he thought of the eternity *behind* him. Meanwhile his trouble with Jane had partly receded to the background of thought and feeling. He did not expect to see her at his breakfast table. That was now a long-time-ago pleasure and he thought that by dinner-time he would be more able to cope with the circumstances.

But when he reached the hall the wide door stood open, the morning sunshine flooded the broad white marble steps which led to the entrance and Jane was slowly ascending them. She had a little basket of fruit in her hand, she was most fittingly gowned, and she looked exquisitely lovely. As soon as John saw her, he ran down the steps to meet her, and she put her hand in his and he kissed it. Then they went to the breakfast-table together.

The truce was too sweet to be broken and John took the comfort offered with gratitude. Jane was in her most charming mood, she waited on him as lord and lover of the home, found him the delicacies he liked, and gave with every one that primordial touch of loving and oneness which is the very heaven of marriage. She answered his words of

Digitized by Google

affection with radiant smiles and anon began to talk of the Club balloting. "Was it really an important meeting, John?" she asked. And to her great surprise John answered, "It would have been hard to make it more important, Jane."

"About old Akers! What nonsense!"

"Akers gave us no hesitation. He was elected without a dissenting vote. Another subject was, however, opened which is of the most vital importance to cotton-spinners."

"Whatever is to do, John?"

"America is likely to go to war with herself—the cotton-spinning States of the North, against the cotton-growing States of the South."

"What folly!"

"In a business point, yes, but there is something grander than business in it—an idea that is universally in the soul of man—the idea of freedom."

"Yes, I have read about that quarrel, but men won't fight if it interferes with their business, with their money-making and spinning."

"You are wrong, Jane. Men of the Anglo-Saxon race and breeding will fight more stubbornly for an idea than for conquest, injury, or even for some favorite leader. Most nations fight for some personality; the English race and its congeners fight for a principle or an idea. My dear, remember that America fought England for eight years only for her right of representation."

"How can a war in America hurt us?"

Digitized by Google

"He ran down the steps to meet her, and she put her hand in his."

Digitized by Google

THE
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
SOCIETY

Digitized by Google

"By cutting off our cotton supply—unless England helps the Southern States."

"But she will do that."

"No, she will not."

"What then?"

"If the war lasts long, we shall have to shut our factories."

"That is not a pleasant thought, John. Let us put it aside this lovely morning."

Yet she kept reverting to the subject, and as all men love to be inquired of and to give information, John was easily beguiled, and the breakfast hour passed without a word that in any way touched the sorrowful anxiety in his heart. But at length they rose and John said,

"Jane, my dear, come into the garden. We will go to the summer-house. I want to speak to you, dear. You know——"

"John, I cannot stay with you this morning. There will be a committee of the ladies of the Home Mission here at eleven o'clock. I have some preparations for them to make and if I get put out of my way in the meantime I shall be unable to meet them."

"Is not our mutual happiness of more importance than this meeting?"

"Of course it is. But you know, John, many things in life compel us continually to put very inferior subjects before either our personal or our mutual happiness. A conversation such as you wish

Digitized by Google

cannot be hurried. I am not yet sure what decision I shall come to."

"Decision! Why, Jane, there is only one decision possible."

"You are taking advantage of me, John. I will not talk more with you this morning."

"Then good morning."

He spoke curtly and went away with the words. Love and anger strove in his heart, but before he reached his horse, he ran rapidly back. He found Jane still standing in the empty breakfast-room; her hands were listlessly dropped and she was lost in an unhappy reverie.

"Jane," he cried, "forgive me. You gave me a breakfast in Paradise this morning. I shall never forget it. Good-bye, love." He would have kissed her, but she turned her head aside and did not answer him a word. Yet she was longing for his kiss and his words were music in her heart. But that is the way with women; they wound themselves six times out of the half-dozen wrongs of which they complain.

The next moment she was sorry, Oh, so sorry, that she had sent the man she loved to an exhausting day of thought and work with an aching pain in his heart and his mental powers dulled. She had taken all joy and hope out of his life and left him to fight his way through the hard, noisy, cruel hours with anxiety and fear his only companions.

"I am so sorry! I am so sorry!" she whispered.

Digitized by Google

"What was the use of making him happy for fifty-nine minutes, and then undoing it all in the sixtieth? I wish—I wish——" and she had a swift sense of wrong and shame in uttering her wish, and so let it die unspoken on her closed lips.

At the park entrance John stood still a minute; his desire was to put Bendigo to his utmost speed and quickly find out the lonely world he knew of beyond Hatton and Harlow. There he could mingle his prayer with the fresh winds of heaven and the cries of beasts and birds seeking their food from God. His flesh had been well satisfied, but Oh how hungry was his soul! It longed for a renewed sense of God's love and it longed for some word of assurance from Jane. Then there flashed across his memory the rumor of war and the clouds in the far west gathering volume and darkness every day. No, he could not run away; he must find in the fulfilling of his duty whatever consolation duty could give him, and he turned doggedly to the mill and his mail.

Once more as he lifted his mail, he had that fear of a letter from Harry which had haunted him more or less for some months. He shuffled the letters at once, searching for the delicate, disconnected writing so familiar to him and hardly knew whether its absence was not as disquieting as its presence would have been.

The mail being attended to, he sent for Greenwood and spoke to him about the likelihood of war and its consequences. Jonathan proved to be quite

Digitized by Google

well informed on this subject. He said he had been on the point of speaking about buying all the cotton they could lay hands on, but thought Mr. Hatton was perhaps considering the question and not ready to move yet.

"Do you think they will come to fighting, Greenwood?" Mr. Hatton asked.

"Well, sir, if they'll only keep to cotton and such like, they'll never fire a gun, not they. But if they keep up this slavery threep, they'll fight till one side has won and the other side is clean whipped forever. Why not? That's our way, and most of them are chips of the old oak block. A hundred years or more ago we had the same question to settle and we settled it with money. It left us all nearly bankrupt, but it's better to lose guineas than good men, and the blackamoors were well satisfied, no doubt."

"How do our men and women feel, Greenwood?"

"They are all for the black men, sir. They hevn't counted the cost to themselves yet. I'll put it up to them if that is your wish, sir."

"You are nearer to them than I am, Jonathan."

"I am one o' them, sir."

"Then say the word in season when you can."

"The only word now, sir, is that Frenchy bit o' radicalism they call liberty. I told Lucius Yorke what I thought of him shouting it out in England."

"Is Yorke here?"

"He was ranting away on Hatton green last

Digitized by Google

night, and his catchword and watchword was 'liberty, liberty, and again liberty!' He advised them to get a blue banner for their Club, and dedicate it to liberty. Then I stopped him."

"What did you say?"

"I told him to be quiet or I would make him. I told him we got beyond that word in King John's reign. I asked if he hed niver heard of the grand old English word *freedom,* and I said there was as much difference between freedom and liberty, as there was between right and wrong—and then I proved it to them."

"What I want to know, Greenwood, is this. Will our people be willing to shut Hatton factory for the sake of—*freedom?*"

"Yes, sir—every man o' them, I can't say about the women. No man can. Bad or good, they generally want things to go on as they are. If all's well for them and their children, they doan't care a snap for public rights or wrongs, except mebbe in their own parish."

"Well, Jonathan, I am going to prepare, as far as I can, for the worst. If Yorke goes too far, give him a set down and advise all our workers to try and save a little before the times come when there will be nothing to save."

"Yes, sir. That's sensible, and one here and there may happen listen to me."

Then John began to consider his own affairs, for his married life had been an expensive one and

Digitized by Google

Harry also a considerable drain on his everyday resources. He was in the midst of this uncomfortable reckoning, when there was a strong decisive knock at the door. He said, "Come in," just as decisively and a tall, dark man entered—a man who did not belong to cities and narrow doorways, but whom Nature intended for the hills and her wide unplanted places. He was handsomely dressed and his long, lean, dark face had a singular attraction, so much so, that it made everything else of small importance. It was a face containing the sum of human life and sorrow, its love, and despair, and victory; the face of a man that had been and always would be a match for Fate.

John knew him at once, either by remembrance or some divination of his personality, and he rose to meet him saying, "I think you are Ralph Lugur. I am glad to see you. Sit down, sir."

"I wish that I had come on a more pleasant errand, John Hatton. I am in trouble about my daughter and her husband."

"What is wrong there?" and John asked the question a little coldly.

"You must go to London, and see what is wrong. Harry is gambling. Lucy makes no complaints, but I have eyes and ears. I need no words."

"Are you sure of what you are saying, Lugur?"

"I went and took him out of a gambling-house three days ago."

"Thank you! I will attend to the matter."

Digitized by Google

"You have no time to lose. If I told you your brother was in a burning house, what haste you would make to save him! He is in still greater danger. The first train you can get is the best train to take."

"O Harry! Harry!" cried John, as he rose and began to lock his desk and his safe.

"Harry loves and will obey you. Make haste to help him before he begins to love the sin that is now his great temptation."

"Do you know much of Harry?"

"I do and I love him. I have kept watch over him for some months. He is worth loving and worth saving. Go at once to him."

"Have you any opinion about the best means to be used in the future?"

"He must leave London and come to Hatton where he can be under your constant care. Will you accept this charge? I do not mind telling you that it is your duty. These looms and spindles any clever spinner can direct right, but it takes a soul to save a soul. You know that."

"I will be in London tonight, Mr. Lugur. You are a friend worth having. I thank you."

"Good-bye! I leave for Cardiff at once. I leave Harry with God and you—and I would not be hard with Harry."

"I shall not. I love Harry."

"You cannot help loving him. He is doing wrong, but you cannot stop loving him, and you

Digitized by Google

know it was *while as yet we were sinners,* God loved and saved us. Good-bye, sir!"

The door closed and John turned the key and sat down for a few minutes to consider his position. This sorrow on the top of his disagreement with Jane and his anxiety about the threatened war in America called forth all his latent strength. He told himself that he must now put personal feelings aside and give his attention first of all to Harry's case, it being evidently the most urgent of the duties before him. Jane if left for a few days would no doubt be more reasonable. Greenwood could be safely left to look after Hatton mill and to buy for it all the cotton he could lay his hands on. He had not the time to visit his mother, but he wrote her a few words of explanation and as he knew Jane's parlors were full of women, he sent her the following note:

My Dearly Loved Wife,

Instant and important business takes me at a moment's notice to London. I have no time to come and see you, and solace my heart with a parting glance of your beauty, to hear your whispered good-bye, or taste the living sweetness of your kiss, but you will be constantly present with me. Waking, I shall be loving and thinking of you; sleeping I shall be dreaming of you. Dearest of all sweet, fair women, do not forget me. Let me throb with your heart and live in your constant memory. I will write you every day, and you will make all my work easy and all my hours happy if you send me a few kind words to the Charing Cross

Digitized by Google

Hotel. I do not think I shall be more than three or four days absent, but however short or long the time may be, I am beyond all words,

Your devoted husband,
JOHN HATTON.

This letter written, John hurried to the railway station, but in spite of express trains, it was dark when he reached London, and long after seven o'clock when he reached his brother's house. He noticed at once that the parlors were unlit and that the whole building had a dark, unprosperous, unhappy appearance. A servant woman admitted him, and almost simultaneously Lucy came running downstairs to meet him, for during the years that had passed since her marriage to Harry Hatton, Lucy had become a real sister to John and he had for her a most sincere affection.

They went into a parlor in which there had been a fire and stood talking for a few moments. But the fire was nearly out, and the girl had only left a candle on the table, and Lucy said, "I was sitting upstairs, John, beside the children. Harry told me it would be late when he returned home, so I went to the nursery. You see children are such good company. Will you go with me to the nursery? It is the girl's night out, but if you prefer to——"

"Let us go to the nursery, Lucy, and send the girl out. I have come specially to have a long

Digitized by Google

talk with you about Harry and her absence will be a good thing."

Then he took her hand and they went together to a large room upstairs. There was a bright fire burning on this hearth and a large fur rug before it. A pretty bassinet, in which a lovely girl-baby was sleeping, was on one side of the hearth and Lucy's low nursing-chair on the other side, and a little round table set ready for tea in the center. A snow-white bed in a distant corner held the two boys, Stephen and Ralph, who were fast asleep. John stooped first to the baby, and kissed it, and Lucy said, "I have called her Agnes. It was my mother's name when she was on earth. Do you think they call her Agnes in heaven, John?"

"*He hath called thee by thy name,* is one of the tokens given us of God's fatherhood, Lucy."

"Well, John, a father must care what his children are called—if he cares for the children."

"Yes, we may be sure of that." As he spoke, he was standing by the sleeping boys. He loved both, but he loved Stephen, the elder, with an extraordinary affection. And as he looked at the sleeping child, the boy opened his eyes. Then a beautiful smile illumined his face, a delightful cry of wonder and joy parted his lips, and he held out his arms to John. Without a moment's hesitation, John lifted him.

"Dear little Stephen!" he said. "I wish you were a man!"

Digitized by Google

"Then I would always stay with you, Uncle."

"Yes, yes! Now you must go to sleep and to-morrow I will take you to the Hippodrome."

"And Ralph, too?"

"To be sure, Ralph goes, too." Then he tenderly laid Stephen back in bed and watched Lucy from the fireside. She talked softly to him, as she went about the room, attending to those details of forethought of which mothers have the secret. He watched her putting everything in place with silent pleasure. He noted her deft, clever ways, the exquisite neatness of her dress, her small feet so trigly shod, her lovely face bending over the most trivial duty with a smile of sweet contentment; and he could not help thinking hopefully of Harry. Indeed her atmosphere was so afar from whatever was evil or sorrowful that John wondered how he was to begin a conversation which must be a disturbance.

Presently the room was in perfect order, and the children asleep; then she touched a bell, but no one answered it. After waiting a few minutes, she said, "John, the girl has evidently gone out. I must go down for my supper tray. In five minutes I will be back."

"I will go with you."

"Thank you! When Harry is not home, I like to eat my last meal beside the sleeping children. Then I can take a book and read leisurely, so the hours pass pleasantly away."

Digitized by Google

"Is Harry generally late?"

"He has to be late. Very often his song is the last on the program. Here is the tray. It is all ready—except your cup and plate. You will take a cup of tea with me, John?"

"Yes, but I am going to look for Harry soon and I may keep him all night. Do you care? Are you afraid?"

"Harry is safe with you. I am glad you are going to keep him all night, I am not at all afraid," and as she arranged the tray and its contents on the table by the hearth, John heard the sweetest strain of melody thrill the little space between them. He looked at her inquiringly, and she sang softly,

"I dwell
Too near to God, for doubt or fear,
And share the eternal calm."

"Where is Harry tonight?" he asked.

"He was to sing at the *Odeon* in the oratorio of 'Samson.' I used to go and hear him but I cannot leave the children now."

"My dear Lucy, I have come to London specially to talk with you and Harry. I have been made miserable about Harry."

"Who told you anything wrong of Harry?"

"Your father. He is distressed at the road Harry is taking. He says Harry is beginning to gamble."

"Is my father sure of what he says?"

Digitized by Google

"Lucy, I am Harry's elder brother. He is dear as life to me. I am your true friend; be trustful of me. You may speak to me as to your own heart. I have come to help you."

Then she let all the minor notes of doubt and uncertainty go and answered, "Harry needs you, John, though I hardly know how. He is in great temptations—he lost every shilling of the last money you sent. I do not know how he lost it. We are living now on money I saved when Harry made so much more, and my father gave me fifty pounds when he was here, but he advised me not to tell Harry I had it. I was to save it for days Harry had none—for the children. O John, all this troubles me!"

And John's face flamed up, for his family pride was keenly touched. How could Henry Hatton humble his family and his own honor by letting the poor schoolmaster feed his wife and children? And he threw aside then some considerations he had intended to make in Lucy's favor, for he saw that she already shared his anxiety, and so would probably be his best helper in any plan for Harry's salvation, from the insidious temptation by which he was assailed.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER IX

JOHN INTERFERES IN HARRY'S AFFAIRS

Gamblers are reckless men, always living between ebb and flow.

The germ of every sin, is the reflection, whether it be possible.

After John had recovered from the shock which the knowledge of Lugur's interference in the financial affairs of his brother had given him, he drew closer to his sister and took her hand and she said anxiously, "John, what can I do to help you in getting Harry into the right way? I know and feel that all is at present just as it should *not* be. I will do whatever you advise." She was not weeping, but her face was white and resolute and her eyes shone with the hope that had entered her heart.

"As I traveled to London, Lucy, I thought of many ways and means, but none of them stood the test of their probable ultimate results; and as I entered my hotel I let them slip from me as useless. Then I saw a gentleman writing his name in the registry book, and I knew it was Matthew Ramsby. As soon as I saw him the plan for Harry's safety

Digitized by Google

came to me in a flash of light and conviction. So I went and spoke to him and we had dinner together. And I asked him if he was ever coming to Yoden to live, and he said, 'No, it is too far from my hunt and from the races I like best.' Then I offered to rent the place, and he was delighted. I made very favorable terms, and Harry must go there with you and your dear children. Are you willing?"

"O John! It would be like a home in Paradise. And Harry would be safe if he was under your influence."

"You know, Lucy, what Jane's mother has done with Harlow House. Yoden can be made far prettier and far more profitable. You may raise any amount of poultry and on the wold there is a fine run for ducks and geese. I will see that you have cows and a good riding-horse for Harry and a little carriage of some kind for yourself and the children."

"I shall soon have all these pleasant things at my finger ends. O John!"

"But you must have a good farmer to look after the cattle and horses, the meadowland and the grainland and also the garden and orchard must be attended to. Oh, I can see how busy and happy you will all be! And, Lucy, you must use all your influence to get Harry out of London."

"Harry will go gladly, but how can he be employed? He will soon be weary of doing nothing."

Digitized by Google

"I have thought of that. What is your advice on this subject, Lucy?"

"He is tired of painting, and he has let his musical business fall away a great deal lately. He does not keep in practice and in touch with the men of his profession. He has been talking to me about writing a novel. I am sure he has all the material he wants. Do not smile, John. It might be a good thing even if it was a failure. It would keep him at home."

"So it would, Lucy. And Harry always liked a farm. He loves the land. He used to trouble mother meddling in the management of Hatton until he got plainly told to mind his own business."

"Well, then, John, we will let him manage Yoden land, and encourage him to write a book, and he need not give up his music. He has always been prominent in the Leeds musical festivals and Mr. Sullivan insists on Harry's solo wherever he leads."

"You are right, Lucy. In Hatton Harry used to direct all our musical entertainments and he liked to do so. Men and women will be delighted to have him back."

"And he was the idol of the athletic club. I have heard him talk about that very often. O John, I can see Harry's salvation. I have been very anxious, but I knew it would come. I will work joyfully with you in every way to help it forward."

"You have been having a hard time I fear, Lucy."

Digitized by Google

"Outwardly it was sometimes hard, but there was always that wonderful inner path to happiness—you know it, John."

"And you never lost your confidence in God?"

"If I had, I should have come to you. Did I ever do so? No, I waited until God sent you to me. When I first went to Him about this anxiety, He made me a promise. God keeps his promises."

"Now I am going to look for Harry."

"Do you know where he is?"

"I know where the house he frequents is."

"Suppose they will not let you see him?"

"I am going to Scotland Yard first."

"Why?"

"For a constable to go with me."

"You will be kind to Harry?"

"As you are kind to little Agnes. I may have to strip my words for him and make them very plain, but when that is done I will comfort and help him. Will you sleep and rest and be sure all is well with Harry?"

"As soon as my girl returns, I will do as you tell me. Tomorrow I——"

"Let us leave tomorrow. It will have its own help and blessing, but neither is due until tomorrow. We have not used up all today's blessing yet. Good-bye, little sister! Sleeping or waking, dream of the happiness coming to you and your children."

It was only after two hours of delays and denials that John was able to locate his brother. Lugur had

Digitized by Google

given him the exact location of the house, but the man at the door constantly denied Harry's presence. It was a small, dull, inconspicuous residence, but John felt acutely its sinister character, many houses having this strange power of revealing the inner life that permeates them. The man obtained at Scotland Yard was well acquainted with the premises, but at first appeared to be either ignorant or indifferent and only answered John's questions in monosyllables until John said,

"If you can take me to my brother, I will give you a pound."

Then there was a change. The word "pound" went straight to his nervous center, and he became intelligent and helpful.

"When the door is opened again," he said, "walk inside. There is a long passage going backward, and a room at the end of that passage. The kid you want will be in that room."

"You will go with me?"

"Why not? They all know me."

"Tell them my name is John Hatton."

"I don't need to say a word. I have ways of putting up my hand which they know, and obey. Ring the bell. I'll give the doorman the word to pass you in. Walk forward then and you'll find your young man, as I told you, in the room at the end of the passage. I'll bet on it. I shall be close behind you, but do your own talking."

John followed the directions given and soon found

Digitized by Google

himself in a room handsomely but scantily furnished. There were some large easy chairs, a wide comfortable sofa, and tables covered with green baize. A fire blazed fitfully in a bright steel grate, but there were no pictures, no ornaments of any kind, no books or musical instruments. The gas burned dimly and the fire was dull and smoky, for there was a heavy fog outside which no light could fully penetrate. The company were nearly all middle-aged and respectable-looking. Their hands were full of cards, and they were playing with them like men in a ghostly dream. They never lifted their eyes. They threw down cards on the table in silence, they gathered them up with a muttered word and went on again. They seemed to John like the wild phantasmagoria of some visionary hell. Their silent, mechanical movements, their red eyelids, their broad white faces, utterly devoid of intellect or expression, terrified him. He could not avoid the tense, shocked accent with which he called his brother's name.

Harry looked up as if he had heard a voice in his sleep. A strained unlovely light was on his face. His luck had turned. He was going to win. He could not speak. His whole soul was bent upon the next throw and with a cry of satisfaction he lifted the little roll of bills the croupier pushed towards him.

Then John laid his hand firmly on Harry's shoulder. *"Give that money to me,"* he said and in a

Digitized by Google

bewildered manner Harry mechanically obeyed the command. Then John, holding it between his finger and thumb, walked straight to the hearth and threw the whole roll into the fire. For a moment there was a dead silence; then two of the youngest men rose to their feet. John went back to the table. Cards from every hand were scattered there, and looking steadily at the men round it, John asked with intense feeling,

"GENTLEMEN, *what will it profit you, if you gain the whole world and lose your own souls; for what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?*"

A dead silence followed these questions, but as John left the room with his brother, he heard an angry querulous voice exclaim,

"Most outrageous! Most unusual! O croupier! croupier!"

Then he was at the door. He paid the promised pound, and as his cab was waiting, he motioned to Harry to enter it. All the way to Charing Cross, John preserved an indignant silence and Harry copied his attitude, though the almost incessant beating of his doubled hands together showed the intense passion which agitated him.

Half an hour's drive brought them to the privacy of their hotel rooms and as quickly as they entered them, John turned on his brother like a lion brought to bay.

"How dared you," he said in a low, hard voice, "how dared you let me find you in such a place?"

Digitized by Google

"I was with gentlemen playing a quiet game. You had no right to disturb me."

"You were playing with thieves and blackguards. There was not a gentleman in the room—no, not one."

"John, take care what you say."

"A man is no better than the company he keeps. Go with rascals and you will be counted one of them. Yes, and so you ought to be. I am ashamed of you!"

"I did not ask you to come into my company. I did not want you. It was most interfering of you. Yes, John, I call it impudently interfering. I gave way to you this time to prevent a police scene, but I will never do it again! Never!"

"You will never go into such a den of iniquity again. Never! Mind that! The dead and the living both will block your way. We Hattons have been honest men in all our generations. Sons of the soil, taking our living from the land on which we lived in some way or other—never before from dirty cards in dirty hands and shuffled about in roguery, treachery, and robbery. I feel defiled by breathing the same air with such a crowd of card-sharpers and scoundrels."

"I say they were good honest gentlemen. Sir Thomas Leland was there, and——"

"I don't care if they were all princes. They were a bad lot, and theft and cards and brandy were written large on every sickly, wicked, white face of

Digitized by Google

them. O Harry, how dared you disgrace your family by keeping such company?"

"No one but a Methodist preacher is respectable in your eyes, John. Everyone in Hatton knew the Naylors, yet you gave them the same bad names."

"And they deserved all and more than they got. They gambled with horses instead of cards. They ran nobler animals than themselves to death for money—and money for which neither labor nor its equivalent is given is dishonest money and the man who puts it in his pocket is a thief and puts hell in his pocket with it."

"John, if I were you I would use more gentlemanly language."

"O Harry! Harry! My dear, dear brother! I am speaking now not only for myself but for mother and Lucy and your lovely children. Who or what is driving you down this road of destruction? I have left home at a hard time to help you. Come to me, Harry! Come and sit down beside me as you always have done. Tell me what is wrong, my brother!"

Harry was walking angrily about the room, but at these words his eyes filled with tears. He stood still and looked at John and when John stretched out his arms, he could not resist the invitation. The next moment his head was on John's breast and John's arm was across Harry's shoulders and John was saying such words as the wounded heart loves

Digitized by Google

to hear. Then Harry told all his trouble and all his temptation and John freely forgave him. With little persuasion, indeed almost voluntarily, he gave John a sacred promise never to touch a card again. And then there were some moments of that satisfying silence which occurs when a great danger has been averted or a great wrong been put right.

But Harry looked white and wretched. He had been driven, as it were, out of the road of destruction, but he felt like a man in a pathless desert who saw no road of any kind. The fear of a lost child was in his heart.

"What is it, Harry?" asked John, for he saw that his brother was faint and exhausted.

"Well, John, I have eaten nothing since morning —and my heart sinks. I have been doing wrong. I am sorry. I ought to have come to you."

"To be sure. Now you shall have food, and then I have something to tell you that will make you happy." So while Harry ate, John told him of the renting of Yoden and laid before him all that it promised. And as John talked the young man's countenance grew radiant and he clasped his brother's hand and entered with almost boyish enthusiasm into every detail of the Yoden plan. He was particularly delighted at the prospect of turning the fine old house into an unique and beautiful modern home. He laughed joyously as he saw in imagination the blending of the old carved oak furniture with his own pretty maple and rosewood. His artis-

Digitized by Google

tic sense saw at once how the high dark chimney-pieces would glow and color with his bric-a-brac, and how his historical paintings would make the halls and stairways alive with old romance; and his copies of Turner and other landscapes would adorn the sitting- and sleeping-rooms.

John entered fully into his delight and added, "Why, Ramsby told me that there were some fine old carpets yet on the floors and Genoese velvet window-curtains lined with rose-colored satin which were not yet past use."

"Oh, delightful!" cried Harry. "We will blend Lucy's white lace ones with them. John, I am coming into the dream of my life."

"I know it, Harry. The farm is small but it will be enough. You will soon have it like a garden. Harry, you were born to live on the land and by the land, and when you get to Yoden your feverish dream of cities and their fame and fortune will pass, even from your memory. Lucy and you are going to be so busy and happy, happier than you ever were before!"

It was however several days before the change could be properly entered upon. There were points of law to settle and the packing and removal to arrange for, and though John was anxious and unhappy he could not leave Harry and Lucy until they thoroughly understood what was to be done. But how they enjoyed the old place in anticipation! John smiled to see Harry from morning to night in

Digitized by Google

deshabille as workmanlike as possible, with a foot rule or hammer constantly in his hand.

Yes, the London house was all in confusion, but Oh, what a happy confusion! Lucy was so busy, she hardly knew what to do first, but her comfortable good-temper suffused the homeliest duties of life with the sacred glow of unselfish love, and John, watching her sunny cheerfulness, said to himself,

"Surely God smiled upon her soul before it came to this earth."

In a short time Lucy had got right under the situation. She knew exactly what ought to be done and did it, being quite satisfied that Harry should spend his time in measuring accurately and packing with extremest care his pictures and curios and all the small things so large and important to himself. And it was not to Harry but to Lucy that John gave all important instructions, for he soon perceived that it was Harry's way to rush into the middle of things but never to overtake himself.

At length after ten days of unwearying superintendence, John felt that Lucy and Harry could be left to manage their own affairs. Now, we like the people we help and bless, and John during his care for his brother's family had become much attached to every member of it, for even little Agnes could now hold out her arms to him and lisp his name. So his last duty in London was to visit Harry's house and bid them all a short farewell. He found Harry measuring with his foot rule a box for one of his

Digitized by Google

finest paintings. It had to be precisely of the size Harry had decided on and he was as bent on this result as if it was a matter of great importance.

"You see, John," he said, "it is a very hard thing to make the box fit the picture. It is really a difficult thing to do."

John smiled and then asked, "Why should you do it, Harry? It would be so easy *not* to do it, or to have a man who makes a business of the work do it for you." And Harry shook his head and began the measurement of box and picture over again.

"The little chappies are asleep, John, I wouldn't disturb them. Lucy is in the nursery. You had better tell her anything that ought to be done. I shall be sure to forget with these measurements to carry in my head."

"Put them on paper, Harry."

"The paper might get lost."

And John smiled and answered, "So it might."

So John went to the nursery and first of all to the boys' bed. Very quietly they slipped their little hands into his and told him in whispers, "Mamma is singing Agnes to sleep, and we must not make any noise." So very quiet good-bye kisses full of sweet promises were given and John turned towards Lucy. She sat in her low nursing-chair slowly rocking to-and-fro the baby in her arms. Her face was bent and smiling above it and she was singing sweet and singing low a strain from a pretty lullaby,

Digitized by Google

"O rock the sweet carnation red,
And rock the silver lining,
And rock my baby softly, too,
With skein of silk entwining.
Come, O Sleep, from Chio's Isle!
And take my little one awhile!"

She had lost all her anxious expression. She was rosy and smiling, and looked as if she liked the nursery rhyme as well as Agnes did and that Agnes liked it was shown by the little starts with which she roused herself if she felt the song slipping away from her.

"Let me kiss the little one," said John, "and then I must bid you good-bye. We shall soon meet again, Lucy, and I am glad to leave you looking so much better."

Lucy not only looked much better, she was exceedingly beautiful. For her nature reached down to the perennial, and she had kept a child's capacity to be happy in small, everyday pleasures. It was always such an easy thing to please her and so difficult for little frets to annoy her. Harry's inconsequent, thoughtless ways would have worried and tried some women to the uttermost, for he was frequently less thoughtful and less helpful than he should have been. But Lucy was slow to notice or to believe any wrong of her husband and even if it was made evident to her she was ready to forgive it, ready to throw over his little tempers, his hasty rudenesses,

Digitized by Google

and his never-absent selfishness, the cloak of her merciful manifest love.

"What a loving little woman she is!" thought John, but really what affected him most was her constant cheerfulness. No fear could make her doubt and she welcomed the first gleam of hope with smiles that filled the house with the sunshine of her sure and fortunate expectations. How did she do it? Then there flashed across John's mind the words of the prophet Isaiah, "Thou meetest him *that rejoiceth,* and worketh righteousness." God does not go to meet the complaining and the doubting and the inefficient. He goes to meet the cheerful, the courageous and the good worker; that is, God helps those who help themselves. And God's help is not a peradventure; it is potential and mighty to save; "for our Redeemer is strong. He shall thoroughly plead our cause," in every emergency of Life.

Very early next morning John turned a happy face homeward. The hero of today has generally the ball of skepticism attached to his foot, but between John Hatton and the God he loved there was not one shadow of doubt. John knew and was sure that everything, no matter how evil it looked, would work together for good.

It was a day of misty radiance until the sun rose high and paved the clouds with fire. Then the earth was glad. The birds were singing as if they never would grow old, and, Oh, the miles and miles of

Digitized by Google

green, green meadows, far, far greener than the youngest leaves on the trees! There were no secrets and no nests in the trees yet, but John knew they were coming. He could have told what kind of trees his favorite birds would choose and how they would build their nests among the branches.

Towards noon he caught the electric atmosphere pouring down the northern mountains. He saw the old pines clambering up their bulwarks, and the streams glancing and dancing down their rocky sides and over the brown plowed fields below great flocks of crows flying heavily. Then he knew that he was coming nigh to Hatton-in-Elmete and at last he saw the great elm-trees that still distinguished his native locality. Then his heart beat with a warmer, quicker tide. They blended inextricably with his thoughts of mother and wife, child and home, and he felt strongly that mystical communion between Man and Nature given to those

> Whose ears have heard
> The Ancient Word,
> Who walked among the silent trees.

Not that Nature in any form or any measure had supplanted his thoughts of Jane. She had been the dominant note in every reflection during all the journey. Mountain and stream, birds and trees and shifting clouds had only served as the beautiful background against which he set her in unfading beauty

Digitized by Google

and tenderness. For he was sure that she loved him and he believed that Love would yet redeem the past.

During his absence she had written him the most affectionate and charming letters and when the train reached Hatton-in-Elmete, she was waiting to receive him. He had a very pardonable pride in her appearance and the attention she attracted pleased him. In his heart he was far prouder of being Jane's husband than of being master of Hatton. She had driven down to the train in her victoria, and he took his seat proudly at her side and let his heart fully enjoy the happy ride home in the sunshine of her love.

A delightful lunch followed and John was glad that the presence of servants prevented the discussion of any subject having power to disturb this heavenly interlude. He talked of the approaching war, but as yet there was no tone of fear in his speculations about its effects. He told her of his visits to her uncle, and of the evenings they had spent together at Lord Harlow's club; or he spoke in a casual way of Harry's coming to Yoden and of little external matters connected with the change.

But as soon as they were alone Jane showed her disapproval of this movement. "Whatever is bringing your brother back to the North?" she asked. "I thought he objected both to the people and the climate."

"I advised him to take Ramsby's offer for Yoden.

Digitized by Google

The children needed the country and Harry was not as I like to see him. I think they will be very happy at Yoden. Harry always liked living on the land. He was made to live on it."

"I thought he was made to fiddle and sing," said Jane with a little scornful laugh.

"He does both to perfection, but a man's likes and dislikes change, as the years go by."

"Yes, plenty of women find that out."

Her tone and manner was doubtful and unpleasant, the atmosphere of the room was chilled, and John said in a tentative manner, "I will now ride to Hatton Hall. Mother is expecting me, I know. Come with me, Jane, and I will order the victoria. It is a lovely afternoon for a drive."

"I would rather you went alone, John."

"Why, my dear?"

"It will spare me telling you some things I do not care to speak about."

"What is wrong at Hatton Hall?"

"Only Mrs. John Hatton."

Then John was much troubled. The light went out of his eyes and the smile faded from his face and he stood up as he answered,

"You have misunderstood something that mother has said."

"Why do you talk of things impossible, John?" Jane asked. "Mrs. Stephen Hatton speaks too plainly to be misunderstood. Indeed her words enter the ears like darts."

Digitized by Google

"Yes, she strips them to the naked truth. If it be a fault, it is one easy to excuse."

"I do not find it so."

"I am sorry you will not go with me, for I shall have to give a good deal of this evening to Greenwood."

"I expected that."

"Go with me this afternoon, *do,* my dear! We can ride on to Harlow also."

"I spent all yesterday with my mother."

"Then, good-bye! I will be home in an hour."

John found it very pleasant to ride through the village and up Hatton Hill again. He thought the very trees bent their branches to greet him and that the linnets and thrushes sang together about his return. Then he smiled at his foolish thought, yet instantly wondered if it might not be true, and thus fantastically reasoning, he came to the big gates of the Hall, and saw his mother watching for his arrival.

He took her hands and kissed her tenderly. "O mother! Mother!" he cried. "How glad I am to see you!"

"To be sure, my dear lad. But if I had not got your note this morning, I would have known by the sound of your horse's feet he was bringing John home, for your riding was like that of Jehu, the son of Nimshi. But there! Come thy ways in, and tell me what has happened thee, here and there."

They talked first of the coming war, and John

Digitized by Google

advised his mother to prepare for it. "It will be a war between two rich and stubborn factions," he said. "It is likely enough to last for years. I may have to shut Hatton mill."

"Shut it while you have a bit of money behind it, John. I heard Arkroyd had told his hands he would lock his gates at the end of the month."

"I shall keep Hatton mill going, mother, as long as I have money enough to buy a bale of cotton at any price."

"I know you will. But there! What is the good of talking about *maybe's?* At every turn and corner of life, there is sure to stand a *maybe.* I wait until we meet and I generally find them more friendly than otherwise."

"I wanted Jane to come with me this afternoon, and she would not do so."

"She is right. I don't think I expect her to come. She didn't like what I said to her the last time she favored me with a visit."

"What did you say to her, mother?"

"I will not tell thee. I hev told her to her face and I will not be a backbiter. Not I! Ask thy wife what I said to her and why I said it and the example I set before her. She can tell thee."

"Whatever is the matter with the women of these days, mother?"

"I'm sure I cannot tell. If they had a thimbleful of sense, they would know that the denial of the family tie is sure to weaken the marriage tie. One thing

Digitized by Google

I know is that society has put motherhood out of fashion. It considers the nursery a place of punishment instead of a place of pleasure. Young Mrs. Wrathall was here yesterday all in a twitter of pleasure, because her husband is letting her take lessons in music and drawing."

"Why, mother, she must be thirty years old. What did you say to her?"

"I reminded her that she had four little children and the world could get along without water-color sketches and amateur music, but that it could not possibly get along without wives and mothers."

"You might have also told her, mother, that if the Progressive Club would read history, they might find out that those times in any nation when wives were ornaments and not mothers were always periods of national decadence and moral failures."

"Well, John, you won't get women to search history for results that wouldn't please them; and to expect a certain kind of frivolous, selfish woman to look beyond her own pleasure is to expect the great miracle that will never come. You can't expect it."

"But Jane is neither frivolous nor selfish."

"I am glad to hear it."

"Is that all you can say, mother?"

"All. Every word. Between you and her I will not stand. I have given her my mind. It is all I have to give her at present. I want to hear something about Harry. Whatever is he coming to Yoden for? Yoden will take a goodish bit of money

Digitized by Google

to run it and if he hasn't a capable wife, he had better move out as soon as he moves in."

Then John told her the whole truth about Harry's position—his weariness of his profession, his indifference to business, and his temptation to gamble.

"The poor lad! The poor lad!" she cried. "He began all wrong. He has just been seeking his right place all these years."

"Well, mother, we cannot get over the stile until we come to it. I think Harry has crossed it now. And there could not be a better wife and mother than Lucy Hatton. You will help and advise her, mother? I am sure you will."

"I will do what I can, John. She ought to have called the little girl after me. I can scarce frame myself to love her under Agnes. However, it is English enough to stick in my memory and maybe it may find the way to my heart. As to Harry, he is my boy, and I will stand by him everywhere and in every way I can. He is sweet and true-hearted, and clever on all sides—the dangerous ten talents, John! We ought to pity and help him, for their general heritage is

"The ears to hear,
The eyes to see,
And the hands
That let all go."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER X

AT HER GATES

We shape ourselves the joy or tear,
  Of which the coming life is made;
And fill our future atmosphere
  With sunshine or with shade.

It was just at the edge of the dark when John left his mother. He had perhaps been strengthened by her counsel, but he had not been comforted. In Hatton market-place he saw a large gathering of men and women and heard Greenwood in a passionate tone talking to them. Very soon a voice, almost equally powerful, started what appeared to be a hymn, and John rode closer to the crowd and listened.

"The Day of the Lord is at hand, at hand,
  His storms roll up the sky;
The nations sleep starving on heaps of gold,
  The dreamers toss and sigh.
The night is darkest before the morn,
When the pain is sorest the child is born,
  And the Day of the Lord is at hand.

"Gather you, gather you, hounds of hell,
  Famine, and Plague, and War,

Digitized by Google

Idleness, Bigotry, Cant and Misrule,
Gather, and fall in the snare.
Hireling and Mammonite, Bigot and Knave,
Crawl to the battlefield, sneak to your grave,
In the Day of the Lord at hand."

John did not hear Greenwood's voice among the singers, but at the close of the second verse it rose above all others. "Lads and lasses of the chapel singing-pew," he cried, "we will better that kind of stuff. Sing up to the tune of Olivet," and to this majestic melody he started in a clarion-like voice Toplady's splendid hymn,

"Lo! He comes with clouds descending,
Once for favored sinners slain,
Thousand, thousand saints attending,
Swell the triumph of his train.
Hallelujah!
God appears on earth to reign."

The words were as familiar as their mother tongue, and Greenwood's authoritative voice in chapel, mill, and trade meetings, was quite as intimate and potential. They answered his request almost as automatically as the looms answered the signal for their movement or stoppage; for music quickly fires a Yorkshire heart and a hymn led by Jonathan Greenwood was a temptation no man or woman present could resist. Very soon he gave them the word *"Home,"* and they scattered in every

Digitized by Google

direction, singing the last verse. Then Greenwood's voice rose higher and higher, jubilant, triumphant in its closing lines,

"Yea, amen! Let all adore Thee,
High on thy eternal throne;
Saviour, take the power and glory,
Claim the kingdom for thine own.
Jah Jehovah!
Everlasting God come down."

Greenwood's joyful enthusiasm was more than John could encounter at that hour. He did not stop to speak with him, but rode swiftly home. He saw and felt the brooding trouble and knew the question of more wage and shorter hours, though now a smoldering one, might at any hour become a burning one, only there was the coming war. If the men went on strike, he could then reasonably lock his factory gates. No, he could not. The inner John Hatton would not permit the outer man to do such a thing. His looms must work while he had a pound of cotton to feed them.

This resolution, warm and strong in his heart, cheered him, and he hastened home. Then he wondered how it would be with him there, and a feeling of unhappiness conquered for a moment. But John's mental bravery was the salt to all his other virtues, and mental bravery does not quail before an uncertainty.

Digitized by Google

He hoped that Jane would, as was her usual custom, meet him at the door, that she would hear his step and answer the call of it. But she did not. Then he remembered that the night had turned chilly and that it was near to dinner-time. She was probably in her dressing-room, but this uncertainty was not cheerful. Yet he sang as he prepared himself for dinner. He did not know why he sang for the song was not in his heart—he only felt it to be an act of relief and encouragement.

When he went to the dining-room Jane was there. She roused herself with a sleepy languor and stretched out her arms to him with welcoming smiles. For a moment he stood motionless and silent. She had dressed herself wonderfully in a long, graceful robe of white broadcloth, rich and soft and shining as the white satin which lay in folds about the bosom and sleeves and encircled her waist in a broad belt. Her hair, freed of puffs and braids, showed all its beauty in glossy smoothness and light coils, and in its meshes was one large red rose, the fellow of which was partly hidden among the laces at her bosom. Half-asleep she went to meet him, and his first feeling was a kind of awe at the sight of her. He had not dreamed she was so beautiful. Without a word he took her hands and hiding his emotion in some commonplace remark, drew her to his side.

"You are lovelier than on your bridal morning, most sweet Jane," he whispered. "What have you been doing to yourself?"

Digitized by Google

"Well, John," she laughed, "Mrs. Tracy sent me word she was going to call between four and five to give me a few points about the girls' sewing-class, and I thought I would at the same time give her a few points about dressing herself. You know she is usually a fright."

"I thought—perhaps—you had dressed yourself to please me."

"You are quite right, John. Your pleasure is always the first motive for anything I do or wear."

The dinner hour passed to such pleasant platitudes as John's description of the manner in which Greenwood broke up the radical meeting in the market-place; but in both hearts and below all the sweet intercourse there lay a sense of tragedy that nothing could propitiate or avert.

The subject, however, was not named till they were quite alone and the very house in its intense stillness appeared to be waiting and listening for the words to be spoken. John was about to speak them, but Jane rose suddenly to her feet and looking steadily at him said,

"John, what did your mother say about me this afternoon? I expect you to tell me every word."

"She would not talk about you in any way. She said she had given you her whole mind straight to your face and would do no backbiting. That is, as you know, mother's way."

"Well, John, I would rather have the backbiting. I like to be treated decently to my face. People are

Digitized by Google

welcome to say whatever they like when I am not present to be annoyed by their evil suspicions."

"She told me to ask you what was said and I trust you will tell me."

"I will. You remember that I had a whole society of women in the parlors and I could only give you a short farewell; but I was much grieved to send you away with such a brooding sorrow in your heart. The next day I was putting the house in order and writing to you and I did not go out. But on the morning of the third day I determined to visit my mother and to call at Hatton Hall as I returned home.

"I did not have a pleasant visit at Harlow. Since mother has begun to save money, she has lost all interest in any other subject. I told her how affairs were between us, and though she had hitherto been rabidly in favor of no children she appeared that morning indifferent to everything but the loss of a brood of young chickens which some animal had eaten or carried off. On this subject she was passionately in earnest; she knew to a farthing the amount of her loss, and when I persisted in telling her how you and I had parted, she only reiterated in a more angry manner her former directions and assurances on this subject.

"After a very spare dinner she was more attentive to my trouble. She said it had become a serious question in nearly all married lives——"

"I deny that, Jane. The large majority of

Digitized by Google

women, I am sure, when they marry do not hold themselves outraged and degraded by the consequences, nor do they consider natural functions less honorable than social ones. Money can release a woman from work, but it cannot release her from any service of love."

"Men forget very easily the physical sufferings of wives. I love our little Martha as well as, perhaps better than, you do, but I remember clearly that for nearly a whole year I endured the solitude, sickness, and acute suffering of maternity. And whatever else you do, you will *never* persuade me to like having children. And pray what kind of children will women bear when they don't want them?"

"Well, Jane, your question would stagger me, if I did not know that Nature often skips a generation, and produces some older and finer type."

"Highly civilized men don't want children. Lady Harlow told me so, John."

"Well then, Jane, highly civilized men are in no danger. They need not fear what women can do to them. They will only find women pleasant to meet and easy to leave. I saw many, many women in the London parks and shopping district so perverted as to be on friendly terms with dogs, and in their homes, with cats and cockatoos, and who had no affection for children—women who could try to understand the screams of a parrot, the barking of a dog, but who would not tolerate the lovely patois of the nursery. Jane, the salvation of society de-

Digitized by Google

pends on good mothers, and if women decline to be mothers at all, it is a shameful and dangerous situation."

"Oh, no! Why should I, for instance, undertake the reformation of society? I wish rather to educate and reform myself."

"All right! No education is too wide or too high for a mother. She has to educate heroes, saints, and good workers. There would have been no Gracchi, if there had been no Cornelia; no Samuel, if Hannah had not trained him. The profession of motherhood is woman's great natural office; no others can be named with it. The family must be put before everything else as a principle."

"John," she said coaxingly, "you are so far behind the times. The idea of 'home' is growing antiquated, and the institution of the family is passing out of date, my dear."

"You are mistaken, Jane. Mother and home are the soul of the world; they will never pass. I read the other day that Horace Walpole thanked God that he came into the world when there were still such terms as 'afternoon' and 'evening.' I hope I may say I came when the ideas of 'home' and 'children' were still the moving principles of human society; and I swear that I will do nothing to sink them below the verge. God forbid!"

"John, I am not concerned about principles. My care is not for anything but what concerns ourselves and our home. I tell you plainly I do not desire

Digitized by Google

children. I will not have any more. I will do all I can to make you honorable and happy. I will order and see to your house, servants, and expenditures. I will love and cherish and bring up properly our dear child. I will make you socially respected. I will read or write, or play or sing to your desire. I will above all other things love and obey you. Is not this sufficient, John?"

"No, I want children. They were an understood consequence of our marriage. I feel ashamed among my fellows——"

"Yes, I suppose you would like to imitate Squire Atherton and take two pews in church for your sons and daughters and walk up the aisle every Sunday before them. It is comical to watch them. And poor Mrs. Atherton! Once she was the beauty of the West Riding! Now she is a faded, draggled skeleton, carelessly and unfashionably dressed, following meekly the long procession of her giggling girls and sulky boys. Upon my word, John, it is enough to cure any girl of the marriage fever to see Squire Atherton and his friend Ashby and Roper of Roper's Mills and Coates of Coates Mills and the like. And if it was an understood thing in our marriage that I should suffer and perhaps die in order that a new lot of cotton-spinners be born, why was it not so stated in the bond?"

"My dear Jane, the trial to which you propose to subject me, I cannot discuss tonight. You have said all I can bear at present. It has been a long, long,

Digitized by Google

hard day. God help me! Good night!" Then he bowed his head and slowly left the room.

Jane was astonished, but his white face, the sad, yonderly look in his eyes, and the way in which he bit his lower lip went like a knife to her heart.

She sat still, speechless, motionless. She had not expected either his prompt denial of her position or its powerful effect on him physically. Never before had she seen John show any symptoms of illness, and his sudden collapse of bodily endurance, his evident suffering and deliberate walk frightened her. She feared he might have a fit and fall downstairs. Colonel Booth had found his death in that way when he heard of his son's accident on the railway. "All Yorkshiremen," she mused, "are so full-blooded and hot-blooded, everything that does not please them goes either to their brains or their hearts—and John *has* a heart." Yes, she acknowledged John had a heart, and then wondered again what made him so anxious to have children.

But with all her efforts to make a commonplace event of her husband's great sorrow, she did not succeed in stifling the outcry in her own heart. She whispered to it to "Be still!" She promised to make up for it, even to undo it, sometime; but the Accuser would not let her rest, and when exhaustion ended in sleep, chastised her with distracting, miserable dreams.

John walked slowly upstairs, but he had no thought of falling. He knew that something had

Digitized by Google

happened to the Inner Man, and he wanted to steady and control him. It was not Jane's opinions; it was not public opinion, however widespread it might be. It was the blood of generations of good men and good women that roused in him a passionate protest against the destruction of their race. His private sense of injustice and disloyalty came later. Then the iron entered his soul and it was on this very bread of bitterness he had now to feed it; for on this bread only could he grow to the full stature of a man of God. His heart was bruised and torn, but his soul was unshaken, and the hidden power and strength of life revealed themselves.

First he threw all anger behind him. He thought of his wife with tenderness and pity only. He made himself recall her charm and her love. He decided that it would be better not to argue the fatal subject with her again. "No man can convince a woman," he thought. "She must be led to convince herself. I will trust her to God. He will send some teacher who cannot fail." Then he thought of the days of pleasantness they had passed together, and his heart felt as if it must break, while from behind his closed eyelids great tears rolled down his face.

This incident, though so natural, shocked him. He arrested such evident grief at once and very soon he stood up to pray. So prayed the gray fathers of the world, Terah and Abram, Lot and Jacob; and John stood at the open window with his

Digitized by Google

troubled face lifted to the starlit sky. His soul was seeking earnestly that depth in our nature where the divine and human are one, for when the brain is stupefied by the inevitable and we know not what to abandon and what to defend, that is the sanctuary where we shall find help for every hour of need.

What words, wonderful and secret, were there spoken it is not well to inquire. They were for John's wounded heart alone, and though he came from that communion weeping, it was

> —as a child that cries,
> But crying, knows his Father near.

Nothing was different but he sat down hushed and strengthened, and in his heart and on his lips the most triumphant words a man or woman can utter, *"Thy Will be done!"* Then there was a great peace. He had cast all his sorrow upon God and *left it with God.* He did not bring it back with him as we are so ready to do. It was not that he comprehended any more clearly why this sorrow and trial had come to darken his happy home, but Oh, *what matters comprehension when there is faith!* John did not make inquiries; he knew by experience that there are spiritual conditions as real as physical facts. The shadows were all gone. Nothing was different,

> —yet this much he knew,
> His soul stirred in its chrysalis of clay,

Digitized by Google

A strange peace filled him like a cup; he grew
Better, wiser and gladder, on that day:
This dusty, worn-out world seemed made anew,
Because God's Way, had now become his way.

Then he fell into that sleep which God gives to his beloved, and when he awoke it was the dayshine. The light streamed in through the eastern windows, there was a robin singing on his window sill, and there was no trouble in his heart but what he could face.

His business was now urging him to be diligent, and his business—being that of so many others, he durst not neglect it. Jane he did not see. Her maid said she had been ill all night and had fallen asleep at the dawning, and John left her a written message and went earlier to the mill than usual. But Greenwood was there, busily examining bales of cotton and singing and scolding alternately as he worked. John joined him and they had a hard morning's work together, throughout which only one subject occupied both minds—the mill and cotton to feed its looms.

In the afternoon Greenwood took up the more human phase of the question. He told John that six of their unmarried men had gone to America. "They think mebbe they'll be a bit better off there, sir. I don't think they will."

"Not a bit."

"And while you were away Jeremiah Stokes left

Digitized by Google

his loom forever. It didn't put him out any. It was a stormy night for the flitting—thunder and lightning and wind and rain—but he went smiling and whispering,

"There is a land of pure delight!"

"The woman, poor soul, had a harder journey."

"Who was she?"

"Susanna Dobson. You remember the little woman that came from Leeds?"

"Yes. Loom forty. I hope she has not left a large family."

"Nay, if there had been a big family, she would varry likely hev been at her loom today"—then there were a few softly spoken words, and John walked forward, but he could not forget how singularly the empty loom had appealed to him on that last morning he had walked through the mill with Greenwood. There are strange coincidences and links in events of which we know nothing at all—occult, untraceable altogether, material, yet having distinct influences not over matter but over some one mind or heart.

A little before closing time Greenwood said, "Julius Yorke will be spreading himself all over Hatton tonight. A word or two from thee, sir, might settle him a bit."

"I think you settled him very well last night."

"It suited me to do so. I like to threep a man

Digitized by Google

that is my equal in his head piece. Yorke is nobbut a hunchbacked dwarf and he talks a lot of nonsense, but he *feels* all he says. He's just a bit of crooked humanity on fire and talking at white heat."

"What was he talking about?"

"Rights and wrongs, of course. There was a good deal of truth in what he said, but he used words I didn't like; they came out of some blackguard's dictionary, so I told him to be quiet, and when he wouldn't be quiet, we sung him down with a verse out o' John Wesley's hymn-book."

"All right! You are a match for Yorke, Greenwood. I will leave him to you. I am very weary. The last two days have been hard ones."

There was a tone of pathos in John's words and voice and Greenwood realized it. He touched his cap, and turned away. "Married men hev their own tribulations," he muttered. "I hev had a heartache mysen all day long about the way Polly went on this morning. And her with such a good husband as I am!"

Greenwood went home to such discouraging reflections, and John's were just as discomforting. For he had left his wife on the previous night, in a distressed unsettled condition, and he felt that there was now something in Jane's, and his own, past which must not be referred to, and indeed he had promised himself never to name it.

But a past that is buried alive is a difficult ghost to lay, and he feared Jane would not be satisfied

Digitized by Google

until she had opened the dismal grave of their dead happiness again—and perhaps again and again. He set his lips straight and firm during this reflection, and said something of which only the last four words were audible, "Thy grace is sufficient."

However, there was no trace of a disposition to resume a painful argument in Jane's words or attitude. She looked pale from headache and wakefulness, but was dressed with her usual care, and was even more than usually solicitous about his comfort and satisfaction. Still John noticed the false note of make-believe through all her attentions and he was hardly sorry when she ended a conversation about Harry's affairs by a sudden and unexpected reversion to her own. "John," she said, with marked interest, "I was telling you last night about my visit to Hatton Hall while you were in London. You interrupted and then left me. Have you any objections to my finishing the story now? I shall not go to Hatton Hall again and as mother declines to tell her own fault, it is only fair to me that you know the whole truth. I don't want you to think worse of me than is necessary."

"Tell me whatever you wish, Jane, then we will forget the subject."

"As if that were possible! O John, as if it were possible to forget one hour of our life together!"

"You are right. It is not possible—no, indeed!"

"Well, John, when I left Harlow House that afternoon, I went straight to Hatton Hall. It was

Digitized by Google

growing late, but I expected to have a cup of tea there and perhaps, if asked, stay all night and have a good wise talk over the things that troubled me. When I arrived at the Hall your mother had just returned from the village. She was sitting by the newly-made fire with her cloak and bonnet on but they were both unfastened and her furs and gloves had been removed. She looked troubled, and even angry, and when I spoke to her, barely answered me. I sat down and began to tell her I had been at Harlow all day. She did not inquire after mother's health and took no interest in any remark I made."

"That was very unlike my mother."

"It was, John. Finally I said, 'I see that you are troubled about something, mother,' and she answered sharply, 'Yes, I'm troubled and plenty of reason for trouble.' I asked if I could help in any way."

John sat upright at this question and said, "What reply did mother make?"

"She said, 'Not you! The trouble is past all help now. I might have prevented it a few days ago, but I did not know the miserable lass was again on the road of sin and danger. Nobody knew. Nobody stopped her. And, O merciful God, in three days danger turned out to be death! I have just come back from her funeral.' 'Whose funeral?' I asked. 'Susanna Dobson's funeral,' mother said. 'Did you never hear John speak of her?' I told

Digitized by Google

her you never spoke to me of your hands; I knew nothing about them. 'Well then,' mother continued, 'I'll tell you something about Susanna. Happen it may do you good. She came here with her husband and baby all of three years ago, and they have worked in Hatton factory ever since. She was very clever and got big wages. The day before John went to London she was ill and had to leave her loom. The next day Gammer Denby came to tell me she was very ill and must have a good doctor. I sent one and in the afternoon went to see her. By this time her husband had been called from the mill, and while I was sitting at the dying woman's side, he came in.' "

"Stop, Jane. My dear love, what is the use of bringing that dying bed to our fireside? Mother should not have repeated such a scene."

"She did, however. I was leaving the room when she said, 'Listen a moment, Jane. The man entered angrily, and leaning on the footboard of the bed cried out, "So you've been at your old tricks once more, Susanna! This is the third time. You are a bad woman. I will never live with you again. I am going away forever, and I'll take little Willy with me. If you aren't fit to be a mother, you aren't fit to be a wife!" She cried out pitifully, but he lifted the child in his arms and went out with him.'

"At these words, John, I rang the bell and ordered my horse. Mother paid no attention to that, but continued, 'The woman raved all night, and died

Digitized by Google

early the next morning.' I said with a good deal of anger, that her husband's brutality had killed her and that the grave was the only place for a poor woman who was married to such a monster. And then I heard the trampling of horses' feet and I came away without another word. But my heart was hot and I was sick and trembling and I rode so recklessly that it was a wonder I ever reached home."

"My dear Jane, I think——"

"Nay, John, I do not want you to express any opinion on the subject. I should not respect you if you said your mother could do wrong, and I do not wish to hear you say she did right. I only want you to understand why I refuse to go to Hatton Hall any more."

"Do not say that, Jane. I am sure mother was conscious of no feeling but a desire to do good."

"I do not like her way of doing good. I will not voluntarily go to receive it. Would you do so, John?"

"She is my mother. A few words could not drive us apart. She may come to you, you may go to her. As to that, nothing is certain."

"Except that your words are most uncertain and uncomforting, John."

Then John rose and went to her side and whispered those little words, those simple words, those apparently meaningless, disconnected words which children and women love and understand so well.

Digitized by Google

And she wept a little and then smiled, and the wretched story was buried in love and pity—and perhaps the poor soul knew it!

"You see, Jane, my dear one, the Unknown fulfills what we never dare to expect, so we will leave the door wide open for Faith and Hope." And as John said these words, he had a sudden clear remembrance of the empty loom and the fair little woman he had so often seen at work there. Then a prayer leaped from his heart to the Everlasting Mercy, a prayer we too seldom use, "Father, forgive, they know not what they do."

For a moment or two they sat hand in hand and were silent. Then Jane, who was visibly suffering from headache, went to her room, and John took a pencil and began to make figures and notes in his pocketbook. His face and manner was quiet and thoughtful. He had consented to his trial outwardly; inwardly he knew it to be overcome. And to suffer, to be wronged and unhappy, yet not to cease being loving and pleasant, implies a very powerful, Christ-like disposition.

He knew well very hard days were before his people, and he was now endeavoring by every means in his power to provide alleviations for the great tragedy he saw approaching. All other things seemed less urgent, and a letter from Harry full of small worries about pictures and bric-a-brac was almost an irritation. But he answered it in brotherly fashion and laid the responsibility so kindly

Digitized by Google

on Harry himself that the careless young fellow was proudly encouraged and uplifted.

In the meantime the small cloud in the far west was casting deeper shadows of forthcoming events, but in the lovely springtime they were not very alarming. Also in Hatton town the people relied on the Master of Hatton. They told themselves he was doing all that could be done to ward off evil and they trusted in him. And no one foresaw as yet how long the struggle would last. So Harry Hatton's return to the home county and neighborhood was full of interest. He was their favorite and their friend, and he had been long enough away to blot out any memory of his faults; and indeed a fault connected with horses calls forth from Yorkshiremen ready excuse and forgiveness. As to the mill, few of its workers blamed him for hating it. They hated it also and would have preferred some other out-door employment. So Harry's return was far more interesting than the supply of cotton, and then England might do this and that and perhaps France might interfere. That wide, slippery word "perhaps" led them into many delusive suppositions.

Very nearly three weeks after John left him in London, Harry announced his purpose of being in Yoden the following afternoon. He said his furniture and trunks had arrived there three days previously, having gone to Yoden by railway. In the afternoon John went up the hill to tell his mother and found her thoroughly aware of all Harry's plans.

Digitized by Google

"I went to Yoden, John, a week ago," she said, "to hire men to meet the furniture and take it to the house. Well, I can tell you I was a bit amazed to find there had been a lot of workmen there for more than two weeks—paperers, painters, decorators and upholsterers. I thought you had sent them to Yoden."

"Not I! Not one of them. Did you think I could be so wicked? I want every penny I can touch for cotton."

"Wicked or not, the men were there. They were not men of this side of England either. I asked who sent them to Yoden, and one of them told me they came from Sandfords', Bond Street, London. I dare say Harry sent them."

"Then I fear Harry must pay for it. It is a bad time for him to be extravagant."

"Well then, if Harry can't pay, I can. Don't thee be cross with the poor lad. He hesn't found life very pleasant so far and now that a bit of pleasure comes into it, he's right to make the most of it."

"All shall be as you wish, mother. Will you meet them tomorrow afternoon?"

"Nay, I know better. Lucy will be worn out, dusty and hungry, and she'll thank nobody for bothering her, until she is rested. I'll go early next morning. Lucy knows there is a time to call and a time to bide at home."

John took dinner with his mother, and as they

Digitized by Google

were eating it, Mrs. Hatton said, "I suppose Jane is at Thirsk Hall tonight."

"Yes," answered John. "I refused the invitation. I could not think of feasting and dancing with the cry of War and Famine at my door."

"You are saying too much, John. Neither war nor famine can touch you."

"If it touches those who work for me and with me, it touches me. I must think of them as well as myself."

"How is little Martha? I never see her now."

"Jane keeps her at her own side. She has many fine new ideas about the bringing up of children."

"Did she take Martha to Thirsk with her?"

"Not likely. I hope not."

"Hum-m!"

Towards dusk John rode slowly down the hill. Somehow he had missed the usual tonic of his mother's company, and Harry's unexpected expenses troubled him, for it is the petty details of life rather than its great sorrows which fret and irritate the soul. Indeed, to face simple daily duties and trials bravely and cheerfully is the most heroic struggle and the greatest victory the soul can win. That it is generally unwitnessed and unapplauded, that it seldom gains either honor or gratitude, that it is frequently despised and blamed, is not to be regarded. It is the fine tooling or graving on the soul capable of bearing it, of that supreme grace we call character; that grace that makes all the difference between

Digitized by Google

one human being and another that there is between a block of granite and a reach of shifting sand. Every person we meet, has more or less of this quality, and not to be influenced by it is to belong to those hard blocks of humanity whom Carlyle calls formulas and phantoms.

Well, this little incident of Harry's unexpected extravagance was a line of character-tooling on John's soul. He felt the first keen touches, was suddenly angry, then passive, and as he rode down the hill, satisfied. Some way or other he felt sure the expense would not interfere with the things so vitally important to him. As he rode through the village he noticed that the Spinners' Hall was lit up and that there was a mixed sound of song and laughter and loud talking within and as Jane was at Thirsk he alighted at the door of the hall and went in.

On the platform there was one of his own spinners, a lad of seventeen years old. The audience were mostly young men and women, and they were dressed for dancing. A mirthful spirit pervaded the room and the usual order was wanting. The lad speaking appeared to be an object of criticism and amusement rather than of respect but he went on talking in a schoolboy fashion of "the rights of the people." He was in a West Riding evening-suit, he had a flower in his coat, and a pair of white gloves in his hand.

"Rich people all hev their rights," he said, "but

Digitized by Google

a poor lad like me can't spend his hard-earned wage without heving to pay this and that sixpenny claim——"

"For board and lodging, Sam," cried a pretty girl impatient for the talking to cease, and the dance to begin.

"Silence!" a voice called authoritatively and the lecturer stopped and looked round. Then a big dark man pushed his way through the tittering crowd of girls and reaching the platform, stretched out his hand and grasping one of its supports, leaped lightly to it. The feat was not an easy one and it was boldly and gracefully done; a hearty cheer greeted its success. Even John joined in it and then he looked at the man and though there was a slight change in appearance, knew him. It was Ralph Lugur, and as soon as he was generally recognized, order and silence reigned. He turned first to the speaker.

"Samuel, my boy," he said, "keep quiet until you learn how to talk. Your place is at a bobbin frame, it isn't on a platform. What do you know about a rich man's rights?" and a pretty girl looked saucily at the blushing lad and laughed.

"I'll tell you, friends," continued Lugur, "how much right a rich man has in his wealth. He has practically very little. The Poor Laws, the Sunday Laws, the School Laws, the Income Tax, and twenty other taxes that he must pay completely prevent him from doing as he likes with his own money. Rich

Digitized by Google

men are only the stewards of the poor man. They have to provide him with bread, homes, roads, ships, railways, parks, music, schools, doctors, hospitals, and a large variety of other comforts and amusements. And, my dear friends, this is not tyranny. Oh no! It is civilization. And if all these obligations did not control him, there are two powerful and significant people whom he *has* to obey whether he likes to or not. I mean a lady you don't know much about, called Mrs. Grundy; and a gentleman whom you know as much of as you want to know, called Policeman A. Don't you fall into the mistake of taking sides against your country. No! Don't do that but,

"Let the laws of your own land,
Good or bad, between you stand."

Then he slipped off the platform, and the band began to tune up. And the boy who had been sent off the platform to his bobbin frame went up to the pretty girl who had laughed at his oratorical efforts and asked her to dance. She made a mocking curtsey, and refused his request, and John who knew both of them said, "Don't be so saucy, Polly. Samuel will do better next time." But Polly with a little laugh turned away singing,

"He wears a penny flower in his coat, lah-de-dah!
And a penny paper collar round his throat, lah-de-dah!

Digitized by Google

In his mouth a penny pick,
In his hand a penny stick,
And a penny in his pocket, lah-de-dah-heigh!"

John and Lugur walked through the village together, and then John discovered that the remodeling of Yoden was Lugur's gift to the young people who were really to begin life over again in its comfortable handsome shelter.

"My father, Colonel Thomas Lugur, died two years ago," said Lugur, "and as it is now certain that my elder brother was killed in a late Afghan engagement, I came into the Lugur estate naturally. It is not considered a very rich one, but it is quite large enough for all the demands I shall make on it."

Some words of congratulation followed, and then they talked of Harry. "He has a good heart," said Lugur, "and when I learned you were moving in such a sensible way for his salvation, I wanted to help. The improvements I have made at Yoden were not carelessly chosen. Harry loves beautiful surroundings. They may mean little to you or to me, but to him they are almost necessary. He is easily persuaded, but you cannot reason with him. As a general thing you cannot reason with youth. You may as well try to beat a cloud with a stick. Youth moves in the sublime region of its own aspirations."

John laughed softly as he answered, "That is the

Digitized by Google

difficult point with Harry. He cannot find a reality that fills his ideals."

"Well then, Hatton, that is a sign of a rich and varied nature. We must bear with patience and good nature Harry's gushing, little condescensions, for he really thinks the majority of his elders to be grossly ignorant, perverse, and cynical. Yet he really loves us in spite of our faults, so I think we must be lenient with his faults."

Lugur's ideas exactly fitted John's and as the men parted Lugur said, "I foresee that we shall be friends. Call on me, if in the bad days coming I can help you."

"I will do so gladly, Lugur"— and then a silent clasp of their hands said all that was necessary.

At the entrance to John's grounds Lugur turned to the railway station and John walked slowly onward through the wooded park till he came to the main entrance of the house. There were few lights in the front rooms and when the door was opened to him he was painfully conscious of a great silence. He had expected the want of company and light, for Jane had told him she would not return until the following day; but even if we expect unpleasant conditions, the realized expectation does not console us for them. But his dinner was immediately served and he ate it with leisurely enjoyment, letting his thoughts drift calmly with his physical rest and refreshment.

After dinner he was quickly absorbed in a variety

Digitized by Google

of calculations and, lost in this arbitrary occupation, forgot all else until the clock chimed ten. Then with a sigh he folded away a note of results and ordered the closing of the house. A new light was immediately on his face, and he went upstairs like a man who has a purpose. This purpose took him to little Martha's sleeping-room. He opened the door gently. There was only a rush light burning, but its faint beams showed him the soft white bed on which his darling lay sleeping. Noiselessly he stepped to her side and for a few moments stood in silent prayer, looking at the lovely sleeper. No one saw him, no one heard him, and he left the little sanctuary unnoticed by any human eye.

Then he went to his own room, turned the key in his chamber door, and walked straight to the Bible lying open on its stand; and as he read, a glory seemed to shine over its pages and his face reflected the comfort and joy he found there. And afterwards as he stood before the Book with lifted eyes and clasped hands, he was a visible incarnation of that beautiful manliness which is the outcome and result of nearly two thousand years of Christian thought and feeling.

He had not permitted himself to think of his wife. His calculations had demanded his whole mind and intellect and he had purposely occupied himself with subjects that would not permit wandering thought. For he was aware that he had once been jealous of Lord Thirsk and he knew that it was

Digitized by Google

THE
BOSTON-LIBRARY
SOCIETY

"Noiselessly he stepped to her side and . . . stood in silent prayer."

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

not pleasant for him to think of Jane brightening with her beauty Lord Thirsk's mansion while he sat lonely in his own silent home.

But he soon put all such reveries vigorously, even a little angrily, under the positive stamp of his foot as he began to take his own share in the circumstance. "I could have gone with Jane—I did not want to go—I don't like Thirsk—I do not want his hospitality. How could I feast and dance when I know some of my men must be out of work and out of bread in a few weeks—Jane does not feel as I do—Mother does not either—I cannot expect it—but I know!—I know!—I took my own wish and way, and I have no right to complain—I must be just and fair—just and fair to all—to all;" and with this decision, he slept well, courting sleep consciously, because he knew that the times were too full of anxiety to lose the rest so needful in unhappy and doubtful brooding.

In the morning a thing quite unlooked-for occurred. When John went into the breakfast-room Jane was there to receive him. "O John!" she cried, "I am delighted that I caught you napping. I left Thirsk at seven o'clock. Are you not glad to see me?"

"Glad!" He could not find words to express his gladness, but his silent kisses spoke for him and his beaming eyes and the warm clasp of his strong hand. And his coffee was not coffee, it was some heavenly nectar, and his bread was more than the

Digitized by Google

staff of life, it was the bread of love. She brought her chair close to his side, she said *that* was the place of honor. She fed his heart with soft, beaming glances, and she amused him with laughable descriptions of her partners. "After you, John," she said with a pretty seriousness, "after you, John, all other men look so small!" And what man wholly devoted to his wife, would not have been intoxicated with the rapture of a love so near and yet so far from understanding him?

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XI

JANE RECEIVES A LESSON

"There are times in life when circumstances decide for us; it is then the part of wisdom to accept and make the best of what they offer."

Of course Harry would have felt it intolerable to come home just like his neighbors. So he returned to the Hatton district as if he had condescended to accept some pressing invitation to do so. It was, however, almost the last exhibition of his overweening youthful egotism. His mother's best carriage was at the station for Mrs. Henry Hatton and family; his mother's gigs and wagons there for his servants and baggage. Two or three of the village societies to which he had belonged or did yet belong crowded the railway platform. They cheered him when he alighted, and sent him homeward to the music of,

> There may be fairer lands beyond the sea,
> But it's Home! It's Home in the North Country!

Harry's mother was delighted. This public approbation justified her own rather extravagant wel-

Digitized by Google

come, and when John's face showed a shadow of disapproval, she was not pleased.

"It is too much especially at this time, mother. It is more than Harry can or will live up to. Trust me, mother, for I know the men. This noisy welcome was not so much a mark of their friendship and admiration as it was a bid for Harry's help and patronage, and when Harry gets weary of giving and doing or becomes unable to give or do, they will feel wronged and offended and perhaps express their dissatisfaction just as pointedly."

"He is thy own brother, and I wouldn't be jealous of his popularity if I was thee."

"Jealous! Mother! How can you accuse me of such a feeling?" He could say no more for he was deeply pained at the charge.

"Well, John, I was wrong to say 'jealous.' I said it because it was the ugliest word I could think of at the moment."

"If you thought I was jealous, you were right to tell me so."

"Nay, my lad, I didn't think so—not for a moment—so I was wrong. Well, then, we all say the wrong word sometimes."

"To be sure we do."

"Just out of pure ugliness."

"Or misunderstanding?"

"Not in Martha Hatton's case. She understands well enough. Sometimes she is sorry, as she is now. Generally speaking, she is satisfied with herself.

Digitized by Google

Why did you not go to Yoden with your brother? Were you afraid of vexing Jane?"

"I thought as you did, that they would prefer going home alone. The children were tired and hungry. Lucy had a headache, and after sending off their baggage and servants, I gave them a promise to see them tomorrow. I think, too, that Mr. Lugur was sure to be at Yoden."

This air of returning home victorious over some undeserved misfortune and of taking possession of a home to which he had some ancient right, was the tone given to Harry's settlement at Yoden, and for a long time he felt compelled to honor it, even after it had become stale and tedious. For it pleased his mother, and she did many unconsidered things to encourage it. For instance, she gave a formal dinner at Hatton Hall to which she invited all the county families and wealthy manufacturers within her knowledge. A dinner at Hatton Hall was a rare social ceremony and had not been observed since the death of the late Master of Hatton. But Stephen Hatton had been a member of Parliament, and chairman of many clubs and associations, and it belonged to his public position to give dinners to his supporters.

However, Hatton dinners and receptions had always been popular when in vogue, and the countryside was well satisfied in their apparent renewal; and as there were two weeks given to prepare for the occasion, it was fairly possible that everyone

Digitized by Google

invited would answer the call personally. For several reasons John seriously objected to the entertainment, but seeing that opposition would be both offensive and useless, he accepted what he could not decline.

Then he began to look for ways in which good might come from such an occasion. It would certainly give him an opportunity of trying to unite the cotton-spinners in Hatton district and of systematizing the best manner of helping the already large body of men out of work. In Hatton Hall he found that it gave his mother a delightful rejuvenation. She became the busiest and happiest of women amid her preparations, and it brought his wife and Lucy together in a sensible way after he had given up all hope of doing so. For when Lucy received her invitation she began at once to consider what she must wear at such an important social function. Harry had but a confused idea, Mrs. Stephen Hatton's favorite fashions were considerably behind the period, and Mr. Lugur's advice was after the strictest Methodist rules.

So Lucy waived all rites and ceremonies and called on Mrs. John Hatton for advice. Jane was alone when the visit was made, and the heaviness and boredom of mid-afternoon was upon her. Mrs. Harry's card was a relief. It would please John very much, she reflected, and so looking in her mirror and finding her dress correct and becoming, she had Lucy brought to her private sitting-room. She

Digitized by Google

met her sister-in-law with a kindness that astonished herself, and nothing occurred during the visit to make her regret her courtesy.

Lucy's sweet nature and her utter want of self-consideration won its way, as it always did; and Jane was astonished at her youthful freshness and her great beauty. They shook hands and smiled pleasantly, and then Lucy apologized for her initiative call and Jane waxed ashamed of her cold, aloof attitude. She felt that she had lost something irrevocably by her neglect of domestic duties so obvious and so generally observed. "I did not think you were really settled yet," she explained, "and it was so kind of you to call first."

"I am afraid it is rather a selfish call, Mrs. Hatton."

"Oh, you must not call me Mrs. Hatton. There are three of us, you know; though it is likely that our mother-in-law assumes the title, and you are Mrs. Harry and I am Mrs. John. It would be quite in sympathy with her way, and her manner of thinking. So call me Jane, and I will call you Lucy. John always speaks of you as Lucy."

"John gave me a sister's place from the first. John does not know how to be unkind. I came, Jane, to ask you how I must dress for the Hatton dinner. I could make nothing of Harry's advice."

"What did he suggest?"

"Anything from cloth of gold to book muslin."

"And the color?"

Digitized by Google

"A combination impossible. Harry's idea of color in pictures is wonderfully good; in dress it would be for me almost ridiculous. I think Harry likes all colors and he did not know which to select. He advises me also, that I must wear a low-cut bodice and very short sleeves. I have never done this, and I do not think that I should either feel right or do right to follow such advice."

"There would not be anything wrong in such a dress, but you would not be graceful in any kind of garment you do not wear *habitually*."

Then Jane showed her sister-in-law all her finest costumes, told her what modistes made them, and at what social functions they were worn. When this exhibition was over, the afternoon was advanced. They drank a cup of tea together and Jane thought Mrs. Harry the most attractive and affectionate woman she had ever met. She begged her to send for Harry and to stay for dinner, and Lucy was delighted at the invitation but said she could not leave her children because Agnes was not yet weaned and "she will need me and cry for me." Then with an enchanting smile she added, "And you know, I should want her. A mother cannot leave a nursing babe, can she?"

These words were the only minor notes in the interview; they were the only words Jane did not tell her husband. Otherwise, she made a charming report of the visit. "She is a darling!" was her comment, and, "No wonder that Harry adores her.

Digitized by Google

John, she makes you feel that goodness is beautiful, and she looks so young and lovely and yet she has three children! It is amazing!"

John longed to intimate that the three children might be the secret of Lucy's youth and beauty, but he refrained himself even from good words. And which of us cannot recall certain interviews in life when we refrained from good words and did wisely; and other times when we said good words and did foolishly? So all John said was,

"Did you tell her how to dress, Jane?"

"No. I let her look at my prettiest frocks, and she took note of what she thought possible. I gave her an introduction to my dressmaker who is clever enough to make anything Lucy is likely to desire. What is there about Lucy that makes her so enchanting? While she was in my room, I felt as if there were violets in it."

"It is the perfume of a sweet, loving life, Jane. She brought the love of God into the world with her. Her soul was never at enmity with Him. She would look incredulously at you, if you told her so. I wish you would return her call—very soon, Jane."

"Oh, I certainly shall! I have fallen in love with Lucy, besides people would talk ill-naturedly about me, if I did not."

"Would you care for that?"

"Surely. You do not think, John, that I call on the Taylors and Dobsons and such people because I like them. I am trying to make friends and votes

Digitized by Google

for you, when you decide to take your father's place in the House."

"Then, my dear, you are sacrificing yourself uselessly. I don't know a Yorkshire man who would vote for any candidate for any office because he liked him personally. I would not do so. My father never did such a thing, and Harry, though so thoughtless and emotional, would be equally stubborn."

"But why? Such nonsense, John!"

"No. You do not vote for yourself only; your interest is bound up with the interests of many others. You may be voting for a generation yet unborn. A vote is a sacred obligation."

"I am glad you have told me this. I can now drop several names from my visiting list."

"If you think that is the right way——"

"What do you think is the right way?"

"The kind way is the right way and also the wise way."

"O John, what uncomfortable things you can think of!"

Until the great dinner at Hatton Hall was over, it formed the staple of conversation in the neighborhood. Everyone wondered who would be there and who would be left out. About the dinner itself there was no doubt, for there is little variety in such entertainments. The meat and the drink offerings are similar, and the company are bound by fashion and commonplaces. In the days of John's

Digitized by Google

father men drank heavily of red wines and it was the recognized way for ladies to leave them awhile to discuss their port and politics. John Hatton's hospitality was of a more modern type, although it still preserved a kind of antique stateliness. And this night it had a very certain air of a somewhat anxious amusement. The manufacturers silently wondered as to the condition of each other's mills, and the landed gentry had in their minds a fear of the ability of the land to meet the demands that were likely to be made upon it.

It was a happy turn of feeling that followed an impetuous, unanimous call for song, and Harry rose in their midst and made the room ring to,

"Ye mariners of England,
That guard our native seas,
Whose flag has braved a thousand years,
The battle and the breeze.

"Britannia needs no bulwarks,
No towers along the steep,
Her march is on the mountain waves,
Her home is on the deep.

"The meteor flag of England!
Shall yet terrific burn,
Till Danger's troubled night depart,
And the Star of Peace return."

The last line spoke for every heart, and the honest, proud, joyous burst of loyalty and admiration made

Digitized by Google

men and women something more than men and women for a few glorified moments. Then the satisfied lull that followed was thrilled anew by that most delicious charmful music ever written, "O sweetest melody!" This was the event of the evening. It drew Harry close to every heart. It made his mother the proudest woman in Yorkshire. It caused John to smile at his brother and to clasp his hand as he passed him. It charmed Jane and Lucy and they glanced at each other with wondering pleasure and delight.

After the songs some of the elder guests sat down to a game of whist, the younger ones danced Money Musk, Squire Beverly and Mrs. Stephen Hatton leading, while Harry played the old country dance with a snap and movement that made hearts bound and feet forget that age or rheumatism were in existence.

At eleven o'clock the party dispersed and the great dinner was over. Harry had justified it. His mother felt sure of that. He had sung his way into every heart, and if John was so indifferent about political honors and office, she could think of no one better to fill Stephen Hatton's place than his son Harry. Her dreams were all for Harry because John formed his own plans and usually stood firmly by them, while Harry was easily persuaded and not averse to see things as others saw them.

The next day Harry wrote a very full account of the dinner and the company who attended it, describ-

Digitized by Google

ing each individual, their social rank or station, their physical and mental peculiarities, their dress and even their ornaments or jewelry. This account was read to all the family, then dated, sealed and carefully placed among the records and heirlooms of Hatton Hall. The receptacle containing these precious relics was a very large, heavily carved oak chest, standing in the Master's room. This chest was iron-bound, triple-locked, and required four strong men to lift it, and the family traditions asserted it had stood in its present place for three hundred and forty years. It was the palladium of Hatton Hall and was regarded with great honor and affection.

After this event there were no more attempts at festivity. The clouds gathered quickly and a silent gloom settled over all the cotton-spinning and weaving districts of England. But I shall only touch this subject as it refers to the lives and characters of my story. Its facts and incidents are graven on thousands of lives and chronicled in numerous authentic histories. It is valuable here as showing how closely mankind is now related and that the cup of sorrow we have to drink may be mingled for us at the ends of the earth by people whose very names are strange on our lips. Then

> . . . . "Impute it not a crime
> To me or my swift passage, that I slide
> O'er years."

Digitized by Google

Very sorrowful years in which the strong grew stronger, and the weak perished, unless carried in the Everlasting Arms. Three of them had passed in want and suffering, constantly growing more acute. Mill after mill closed, and the dark, quiet buildings stood among the starving people like monuments of despair. No one indeed can imagine the pathos of these black deserted factories, that had once blazed with sunlight and gaslight and filled the town with the stir of their clattering looms and the traffic of their big lorries and wagons and the call and song of human voices. In their blank, noiseless gloom, they too seemed to suffer.[1]

A large proportion of mill-owners had gone to the continent. They could live economically there and keep their boys and girls at inexpensive schools and colleges. They were not blamed much, even by their employees. "Rathmell is starting wife and childer, bag and baggage for Geneva today," said one of them to another, and the answer was, "Happen we would do the same thing if we could. He

[1] I need hardly remind my readers that I refer to the war of 1861 between the Northern and Southern States. At this time it was in its third year, and the Southern States were closely blockaded and no cotton allowed to leave them. Consequently the cotton-spinning counties of Yorkshire and Lancashire were soon destitute of the necessary staple, and to be "out of cotton" meant to more than a million cotton-spinning families absolute starvation—for a cotton-spinner's hands are fit for no other labor, and are spoiled by other work. This starvation was borne with incredible faith and patience, because the success of the blockading States meant freedom for the slaves of the cotton-growing States.

Digitized by Google

hes a big family. He'll hev to spare at both ends to make his bit o' brass do for all. He never hed any more than he needed."

This was an average criticism and not perhaps an unfair one. Men, however, did not as a rule talk much on the subject; they just quietly disappeared. Everyone knew it to be a most unexpected and unmerited calamity. They had done nothing to deserve it, they could do nothing to prevent it. Some felt that they were in the hands of Destiny; the large majority were patient and silent because they believed firmly that it was the Lord's doing and so was wonderful in their eyes. Some even said warmly it was time slavery was put down, and that millions could not be set free without somebody paying for it, and to be sure England's skirts were not clean, and she would hev to pay her share, no doubt of it. Upon the whole these poor, brave, blockaded men and women showed themselves at this time to be the stoutest and most self-reliant population in the world; and in their bare, denuded homes there were acted every day more living, loving, heroic stories than fiction or poetry ever dreamed of. So far the sufferers of Hatton had kept their troubles to themselves and had borne all their privations with that nobility which belongs to human beings in whom the elements are finely mixed.

John had suffered with them. His servants, men and women, had gradually been dismissed, until only a man and woman remained. Jane had at first de-

Digitized by Google

murred and reminded John that servants must live, as well as spinners.

"True," answered John, "but servants can do many things beside the one thing they are hired to do. A spinner's hands can do nothing but spin. They are unfit for any other labor and are spoiled for spinning if they try it. Servants live in other people's houses. Nearly all of Hatton's spinners own, or partly own, their homes. In its seclusion they can bear with patience whatever they have to bear."

Throughout the past three years of trouble John had been the Greatheart of his people, and they loved and trusted him. They knew that he had mortgaged or sold all his estate in order to buy cotton and keep them at work. They knew that all other factories in the neighborhood had long been closed and that for the last four months Hatton had been running only half-time, and alas! John knew that his cotton was nearly gone and that peace appeared to be as far off as ever.

"You see, sir," said Greenwood, in a half-admiring and half-apologizing way, "both North and South are mostly of good English breed and they don't know when they are whipped."

One afternoon Mrs. Stephen Hatton called at the mill to see John. It was such a strange thing for her to do that he was almost frightened when he heard of it. Strengthening his heart for anything, he went to his private room to meet her, and

Digitized by Google

his anxiety was so evident that she said immediately in her cheerful comforting way,

"Nay, nay, my lad, there is nothing extra for thee to worry about. I only want thee to look after something in a hurry—it must be in a hurry, or I would not have come for thee."

"I know, mother. What is it?"

"They have brought thirty-four little children from Metwold here, and they are in a state of starvation. I want thee to see about getting mattresses and blankets into the spinners' lecture room. I have looked after food for them."

"Have you anything to spare for this purpose, mother?"

"No, I hev not, John. The town hes plenty. They will do whatever thou tells them to do."

"Very well, mother. I will go at once."

"I hev been in the village all day. I hev seen that every poor nursing woman hes hed some soup and tea and that these thirty-four little ones were well and properly fed. Now I am going home to save every drop of milk I can spare for them."

"Is it fair for Metwold to send her starving children here?"

"If thou could see them, John, thou would never ask that question. Some of them are under three years old. They are only skin and bone, they are as white as if they were dead—helpless, enfeebled, crippled, and, John, three of them are stone blind from starvation!"

Digitized by Google

"O my God!" cried John, in an acute passion of pity and entreaty.

"Every sign of severe and speechless misery is on their small, shrunken faces and that dreadful, searching look that shows the desperate hunger of a little child. John, I cried over every one of them. Where was the pitiful Christ? Why did He not comfort them?"

"Mother! Mother! Tell me no more. I can not bear it. Who brought them here?"

"The town officer. They were laid on straw in big wagons. It was a hard journey."

"Where are their mothers?"

"Dead or dying."

"I will see they have beds and blankets. Do you want money, mother, for this service?"

"No."

"But you must."

"I never give money. I give myself, my health, my time, my labor. Money—no!"

"Why not money?"

"Because money answers all ends, and I don't know what end is coming; but I do know that it will be a very uncommon end that money can't answer. Thou must have spent nearly all of it thou had."

"It will come back to me."

"If the war stops soon, happen some of it will come back. If it does not stop soon, thou art standing to lose every shilling of it. So thou sees I must

Digitized by Google

save my shillings in case my children need them. How is Jane?"

"Very well. She is the greatest help and comfort to me. I do not know how I could have borne and done without her."

"Mebbe thy mother might hev helped thee."

And John answered with a beaming smile, "My mother never failed me."

"What is Jane doing?"

"Did you not hear that Mrs. Levy and Jane started a sewing-club for the girl mill-hands? Very few of this class of workers can sew, and they are being taught how to make all kinds of garments for themselves and others. They meet in a large room over Mr. Levy's barn. He has had it well warmed and he gives them one good meal every day."

"I am sure I never thought Jane would notice that woman."

"Mrs. Levy? She says she has the sweetest, kindest nature, and the wisest little ways of meeting emergencies. And I can tell you, mother, that her husband has given his full share of help both in money and work during all these last three bitter years. He will be a greater honor to the Gentlemen's Club than any of the gentlemen who have run away to rest in Italy and left Hatton to starve or survive as she could. Have you seen Harry lately? How is he managing?"

"Harry does not manage at all, but *he is very manageable,* the best quality a man can possess.

Digitized by Google

Lucy manages Harry and everything else at Yoden to perfection. She expects another baby with the spring, but she is well and cheerful and busy as a bee."

"Does Yoden farm do anything worth while?"

"To be sure it does. Lugur helps Harry about the farm and Harry likes work in the open, but Harry's voice is worth many farms. It has improved lately, and next week he goes to Manchester to sing in oratorio. He will bring a hundred pounds or more back with him."

"Then at last he is satisfied and happy."

"Happy as the day is long. He is wasteful though, in money matters, and too ready to give the men he knows a sovereign if they are in trouble. And it is just wasting yourself to talk to him about wasting money. I told him yesterday that I had heard Ben Shuttleworth had been showing a sovereign Mr. Harry gave him and that he ought not to waste his money, and he said some nonsense about saved money being lost money, and that spending money or giving it away was the only way to save it. Harry takes no trouble and Medway, the new preacher, says, Henry Hatton lifts up your heart, if he only smiles at you."

"So he does, mother—God bless him!"

"Well, John, I can't stop and talk with thee all day, it isn't likely; but thou art such a one to tempt talk. I must be off to do something. Good-bye, dear lad, and if thy trouble gets hard on thee and

Digitized by Google

thou wants a word of human love, thy mother always has it ready and waiting for you—so she has!"

John watched his mother out of sight; then he locked his desk and went about her commission. She had trusted him to find beds for thirty-four children, and it never entered his mind that any desire of hers could possibly be neglected. Fortunately, circumstances had gone before him and prepared for his necessity. The mattresses were easily found and carried to the prepared room, and the children had been nourished on warm milk and bread, had been rolled in blankets and had gone to sleep ere John arrived at his own home. He was half-an-hour behind time, and Jane did not like that lost half-hour, so he expected her usual little plaintive reproach, "You are late tonight, John." But she met him silently, slipped her hand into his and looked into his face with eyes tender with love and dim with sorrow.

"Did you see those little children from Metwold, John?"

"No, my dear. Mother told me about them."

"Your mother is a good woman, John. I saw her today bathing babies that looked as if they had never been washed since they were born. Oh, how they smiled lying in the warm water! And how tenderly she rubbed them and fed them and rocked them to sleep in her arms. John, your mother would mother any miserable neglected child. She made

Digitized by Google

me cry. My anger melted away this afternoon as I watched her. I forgave her everything."

"O my darling! My darling Jane!"

"I wanted to kiss her, and tell her so."

After this confession it seemed easier for John to tell his wife that he must close the mill in the morning. They were sitting together on the hearth. Dinner was over and the room was very still. John was smoking a cigar whose odor Jane liked, and her head leaned against his shoulder, and now and then they said a low, loving word, and now and then he kissed her.

"John," she said finally, "I had a letter from Aunt Harlow today. She is in trouble."

"I am sorry for it."

"Her only child has been killed in a skirmish with the Afghans—killed in a lonely pass of the mountains and buried there. It happened a little while since and his comrades had forgotten where his grave was. The man who slew him, pointed it out. He had been buried in his uniform, and my uncle received his ring and purse and a scarf-pin he bought for a parting present the day he sailed for India."

"I do not recollect. I never saw him, I am sure."

"Oh, no! He went with his regiment to Simla seventeen years ago. Then he married a Begum or Indian princess or something unusual. She was very rich but also very dark, and Uncle would not forgive him for it. After the marriage his name was never mentioned in Harlow House, but he was not for-

Digitized by Google

gotten and his mother never ceased to love him. When they heard of his death, Uncle sent the proper people to make investigations because of the succession, you know."

"I suppose now the nephew, Edwin Harlow, will be heir to the title and estate?"

"Yes, and Uncle and Aunt so heartily dislike him. Uncle has spent so many, many years in economizing and restoring the fortune of the House of Harlow, and now it will all go to—Edwin Harlow. I am sorry to trouble you with this bad news, when you have so much anxiety of your own."

"Listen, dearest—I must—shut—the mill—tomorrow—some time."

"O John!"

"There is no more cotton to be got—and if there was, I have not the money to buy it. Would you like to go to London and see your uncle and aunt? A change might do you good."

"Do you think I would leave you alone in your sorrow? No, no, John! The only place for me is here at your side. I should be miserable anywhere else."

John was much moved at this proof of her affection, but he did not say so. He clasped her hand a little tighter, drew her closer to his side, and kissed her, but the subject dropped between them into a silence filled with emotion. John could not think of anything but the trial of the coming day. Jane was pondering two circumstances that seemed to have

Digitized by Google

changed her point of view. Do as she would, she could not regard things as she had done. Of a stubborn race and family, she had hitherto regarded her word as inviolable, her resolves, if once declared, as beyond recall. She quite understood Lord and Lady Harlow's long resentment against their son, and she knew instinctively that her uncle's extreme self-denial for the purpose of improving the Harlow estate was to say to his heir, "See how I have loved you, in spite of my silence."

Now Jane had declared her mind positively to John on certain questions between them, and it never occurred to her that retraction was possible. Or if it did occur, she considered it a weakness to be instantly conquered. Neither Jane Harlow nor Jane Hatton could say and then unsay. And she was proud of this racial and family characteristic, and frequently recalled it in the motto of her house—*"I say! I do!"*

It is evident then that some strong antagonistic feeling would be necessary to break down this barrier raised by a false definition of honor and yet the circumstances that initially assailed it were of ordinary character. The first happened a few weeks previously. Jane had gone out early to do some household shopping and was standing just within the open door of the shop where she had made her purchases. Suddenly she heard John's clear, joyous laugh mingling with the clatter of horses' feet. The sound was coming near and nearer and in a mo-

Digitized by Google

ment or two John passed on his favorite riding-horse and with him was his nephew Stephen Hatton on a pretty pony suitable to his size. John was happy, Stephen was happy, and *she! She* had absolutely no share in their pleasure. They were not thinking of her. She was outside their present life.

An intense jealousy of the boy took possession of her. She went home in a passion of envy and suspicion. She was a good rider, but John in these late years had never found time to give her a gallop, and indeed had persuaded her to sell her pretty riding-horse and outfit. Yet Stephen had a pony and she was sure John must have bought it. Stephen must have been at the mill early. *Why?* Then she recalled John's look of love and pride in the boy, his watchful care over him, his laughter and apparent cheerfulness.

She brooded over these things for some hours, then gave her thought speech and in slow, icy tones said with intense feeling, "Of course, he regards Stephen as the future master of Hatton Hall and Hatton factory. He is always bringing Stephen and my Martha together. He intends them to marry. They shall not. Martha is mine—she is Harlow"—then after a long pause, "They are cousins. I shall have religious scruples."

She did not name this incident to John and it was some days before John said, "Stephen is going to be a fine horseman. His grandfather bought him

Digitized by Google

a pony, a beautiful spirited animal, and Steve was at once upon his back. Yorkshire boys take to horses, as ducks to the water. Mother says I leaped into the saddle before I was five years old."

Jane smiled faintly at this last remark and John said no more on the subject. He understood it to be the better way. But it had been ever since a restless, unhappy thought below all other thoughts in Jane's mind, and finally she had swift personal whispers and slow boring suppositions which, if she had put them into words, would have sounded very like, "Lucy may be disappointed yet! John might have a son of his own. Many things happen as the clock goes round."

She was in one of these jealous moods on the morning after John had told her he must close the mill. Then Mrs. Levy called, and asked if she would drive with her to Brent's Farm. "We have received a large number of young children from Metwold," she said, "and I want to secure milk for them."

"Brent's Farm!" replied Jane. "I never heard of the place."

"O my dear Mrs. Hatton, it is only a small farm on the Ripon road. The farmer is a poor man but he has five or six cows and he sells their milk in Hatton. I want to secure it all."

"Is that fair to the rest of his customers?" asked Jane, with an air of righteous consistency.

"I do not know," was the answer. "I never asked

Digitized by Google

myself. I think it is fair to get it for babies who cannot bargain for their milk—the people they take it from can speak for themselves."

They found Brent's Farm to be a rough, roomy stone cottage on the roadside. There was some pasture land at the back of the house and some cows feeding on it. A stone barn was not far off, and the woman who answered their call said, "If you be wanting Sam Brent, you'll find him in the barn, threshing out some wheat."

Mrs. Levy went to interview the milk dealer; Jane was cold and went into the cottage to warm herself. "It is well I'm at ironing today," said Mrs. Brent, "for so I hev a good fire. Come your ways in, ma'am, and sit on the hearth. Let me make you a cup o' tea."

"My friend will be here in a few minutes," Jane answered. "She only wants to make a bargain with Mr. Brent for all his milk."

"Then she won't be back in a few minutes; Sam Brent does no business in a hurry. It's against his principles. You hed better hev a cup o' hot tea."

It seemed easier to Jane to agree than to dispute, and as the kettle was simmering on the hob it was ready in five minutes. "You see," continued Mrs. Brent, "I hev a big family, and washing and ironing does come a bit hard on me now, but a cup o' tea livens me up, it does that!"

"How many children have you, Mrs. Brent?"

Digitized by Google

"I hev been married seventeen years, and I hev ten lads and lasses—all of them fair and good and world-like. God bless them!"

"Ten! Ten! How do you manage?"

"Varry well indeed. Sam Brent is a forelooking man. They hev a good father, and I try to keep step with him. We are varry proud of our childer. The eldest is a boy and helps his father with the cows main well. The second is a girl and stands by her mother—the rest are at school, or just babies. It *is* hard times, it is that, but God blesses our crust and our cup, and we don't want. We be all well and healthy, too."

"I wonder you are not broken down with bearing so many children."

"Nay, not I! Every fresh baby gives me fresh youth and health—if I do it justice. Don't you find it so, ma'am?"

"No."

"How many hev you hed?"

"One. A little girl."

"Eh, but that's a shame! What does your good man say?"

"He would like more."

"I should think he *would* like more. And it is only fair and square he should *hev* more! Poor fellow!"

"I do not think so."

"Whatever is the matter with thee?"

"I think it is a shame and a great wrong for a

Digitized by Google

woman to spend her life in bearing and rearing children."

"To bear and to rear children for His glory is exactly and perfectly what God sent her into the world to do. It is her work in the days which the Lord her God gives her. Men He told to work. Women He told to hev children and plenty o' them."

"There are more women working in the factories than men now."

"They hev no business there. They are worse for it every way. They ought to be in some kind of a home, making happiness and bringing up boys and girls. Look at the whimpering, puny, sick babies factory women bear—God, how I pity them!"

"Tell me the truth, Mrs. Brent. Were you really glad to have ten children?"

"To be sure, I was glad. Every one of them was varry welcome. I used to say to mysen, 'God must think Susy Brent a good mother, or He wouldn't keep on sending her children to bring up for Him.' It is my work in this life, missis, to bring up the children God sends me, and *I like my work!*" With the last four words, she turned a beaming face to Jane and sent them home with an emphatic thump of her iron on the little shirt she was smoothing.

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XII

PROFIT AND LOSS

The trifles of our daily life,
  The common things scarce worth recall,
Whereof no visible trace remains,
  These are the main springs after all.

O why to those who need them not,
  Should Love's best gifts be given!
How much is wasted, wrecked, forgot,
  On this side of heaven?

The thing that John feared, had happened to him, no miracle had prevented it, and that day he must shut the great gates of Hatton factory. He could hardly realize the fact. He kept wondering if his father knew it, but if so, he told himself he would doubtless know the why and the wherefore and the end of it. He would know, also, that his son John had done all a man could do to prevent it. This was now a great consolation and he had also a confident persuasion that the enforced lock-out would only last for a short time.

"Things have got to their worst, Greenwood," he said, "and when the tide is quite out, it turns instantly for the onward flow."

Digitized by Google

"To be sure it does, sir," was the answer. "Your honored father, sir, used to say, 'If changes don't come, make them come. Things aren't getting on without them.' "

"How long can we run, Greenwood?"

"Happen about four hours, sir."

"When the looms give up, send men and women to the lunchroom."

"All right, sir."

Was it all right? If so, had he not been fighting a useless battle and got worsted? But he could not talk with his soul that morning. He could not even think. He sat passive and was dumb because it was evidently God's doing. Perhaps he had been too proud of his long struggle, and it was good spiritual correction for him to go down into the valley of humiliation. Short ejaculatory prayers fell almost unconsciously from his lips, mainly for the poor men and women he must lock out to poverty and suffering.

Finally his being became all hearing. Life appeared to stand still a moment as loom after loom stopped. A sudden total silence followed. It was broken by a long piercing wail as if some woman had been hurt, and in a few minutes Greenwood looked into his office and said, "They be all waiting for you, sir." The man spoke calmly, even cheerfully, and John roused himself and with an assumed air of hopefulness went to speak to his workers.

Digitized by Google

They were standing together and on every face there was a quiet steadfastness that was very impressive. John went close to them so that he seemed to mingle with them. "Men and women," he said, "I have done my best."

"Thou hes, and we all know it."

It was Timothy Briggs, the manager of the engine room, who spoke, a man of many years and many experiences. "Thou hes done all a man could do," he added, "and we are more than a bit proud of thee."

"I do not think we shall be long idle," continued John, "and when we open the gates again, there will be spinning and weaving work that will keep the looms busy day and night. And the looms will be in fine order to begin work at an hour's notice. When the first bell rings, I shall be at my desk; let me see how quickly you will all be at your looms again."

"How long, master, will it be till we hear the sound of the bell again?"

"Say till midsummer. I do not think it will be longer. No, I do not. Let us bear the trial as cheerfully as we can. I am not going a mile from Hatton, and if any man or woman has a trouble I can lighten, let them come to me. And our God is not a far-off God. He is a very present help in time of need." With these words John lifted his hat a moment, and as he turned away, Greenwood led the little company out, singing confidently,

Digitized by Google

"We thank Him for all that is past,
We trust Him for all that's to come."

John did not go home for some hours. He went over his books and brought all transactions up to date, and accompanied by Greenwood made a careful inspection of every loom, noted what repairs or alterations were necessary, and hired a sufficient number of boys to oil and dust the looms regularly to keep the mill clean and all the metal work bright and shining. So it was well on in the afternoon when he turned homeward. Jane met him at the park gates, and they talked the subject over under the green trees with the scent of the sweetbriar everywhere and the April sunshine over every growing thing. She was a great help and comfort. He felt her encouraging smiles and words to be like wine and music, and when they sat down to dinner together, they were a wonder to their household. They did not speak of the closed mill and they did not look like people who expected a hard and sorrowful time.

"They hev a bit o' money laid by for theirsens," said the selfish who judged others out of their own hearts; but the majority answered quickly, "Not they! Not a farthing! Hatton hes spent his last shilling to keep Hatton mill going, and how he is going to open it when peace comes caps everyone who can add this and that together."

The first week of idleness was not the worst.

Digitized by Google

John and Greenwood found plenty to do among the idle looms, but after all repairs and alterations had been completed, then John felt the stress of hours that had no regular daily task. For the first time in his life his household saw him irritable. He spoke impatiently and did not know it until the words were beyond recall. Jane had at such times a new feeling about her husband. She began to wonder how she could bear it if he were always "so short and dictatorial." She concluded that it must be his mill way. "But I am not going to have it brought into my house," she thought. "Poor John! He must be suffering to be so still and yet so cross."

One day she went to Harlow House to see her mother and she spoke to her about John's crossness. Then she found that John had Mrs. Harlow's thorough sympathy.

"Think of the thousands of pounds he has lost, Jane. For my part I wonder he has a temper of any kind left; and all those families on his hands, as it were. I am sure it is no wonder he is cross at times. Your father would not have been to live with at all."

"I hope you have not lost much, mother."

"O Jane, how could I help losing? Well then, I have been glad I could give. When hungry children *look* at you, they do not need to speak. My God, Jane! You must have seen that look—if it was in Martha's eyes——"

Jane caught her breath with a cry, "O mother!

Digitized by Google

Mother! Do not say such words! I should die!"

"Yes. Many mothers did die. It was like a knife in their heart. When did you see John's mother?"

"The day the children came from Metwold."

"Did you speak to her?"

"No."

"Why not? She has been kind to me."

"You have given her milk for the children, I suppose."

"All I could spare. I do not grudge a drop of it."

Then Jane laid her arm across her mother's shoulders and looked lovingly at her. "I am so glad," she said. "You may value money highly, mother, but you can cast it away for higher things."

"I hope I should never hesitate about that, Jane. A baby's life is worth all the money I have"—and Jane sighed and went home with a new thought in her heart.

She found John and his little daughter in the garden planting bulbs and setting out hardy geraniums. She joined them, and then she saw the old, steadfast light on her husband's face and the old sure smile around his mouth. She put her hand in his hand and looked at him with a question in her loving eyes. He smiled and nodded slightly and drew her hand through his arm.

"Let us go into the house," he said. "The evenings are yet chilly"—and they walked together si-

Digitized by Google

lently and were happy without thought or intention of being happy. A little later as they sat alone, Jane said, "You look so much better than you have done lately, John. Have you had any good news?"

"Yes, my dear one—the best of news."

"Who brought it?"

"One who never yet deceived me."

"You know it to be true?"

"Beyond a doubt. My darling, I have been thinking of the sad time you have had here."

"I hope I have done some good, John."

"You have done a great deal of good. The trouble is nearly over, it will be quite over in a few weeks. Now you could go to London and see your aunt. A change will do you good."

"Cannot you and Martha go with me? You have nothing to do yet."

"I shall have plenty to do in a short time. I must be preparing for it."

"Then I must be content with Martha. It will be good for the child to have a change."

"Oh, I could not part with both you and Martha!"

"Nor could I part with both you and Martha. Besides, who is to watch over the child? She would be too much alone. I should be miserable in London without her."

"I thought while you were in London, I would have the house thoroughly cleaned and renovated. I would open it up to every wind of heaven and let

Digitized by Google

them blow away all sad, anxious thoughts lurking in the corners and curtains."

"O John, I would like that so much! It would be a great comfort to me. But you can see that Martha would be running about cold and warm, wet and dry, and her old nurse went to Shipley when she left here."

"I have considered these things, Jane, and decided that I would take Martha up to Hatton Hall, and we would stay with mother while you were away. It would be a great pleasure to mother, and do us all good."

"But, John, London would be no pleasure to me without Martha."

"I feel much the same, Jane. Martha is the joy of life to me. You must leave me my little daughter. You know her grandmother will take every care of her."

"I can take care of her myself. She has been my companion and comforter all through these past four years of sorrow. I cannot part with her, not for a day."

This controversy regarding the child was continued with unremitting force of feeling on both sides for some time, but John finally gave way to Jane's insistence, and the early days of April were spent in preparations for the journey to London and the redecoration of the home. Then one exquisite spring morning they went away in sunshine and smiles, and John returned alone to his lonely and

Digitized by Google

disorderly house. The very furniture looked forlorn and unhappy. It was piled up and covered with unsightly white cloths. John hastily closed the doors of the rooms that had always been so lovely in their order and beautiful associations. He could not frame himself to work of any kind, his heart was full of regrets and forebodings. "I will go to my mother," he thought. "Until I hear they are safe in Lord Harlow's house, I can do nothing at all."

So he went up to Hatton Hall and found his mother setting her dinner-table. "Eh, but I am glad to see thee, John!" she cried joyfully. "Come thy ways in, dear lad. There's a nice roast turning over a Yorkshire pudding; thou art just in a fit time. What brought thee up the hill this morning?"

"I came to see your face and hear your voice, mother."

"Well now! I am glad and proud to hear that. How is Martha and her mother?"

"They are on their way to London."

"However could thou afford it?"

"Sometimes we spend money we cannot afford."

"To be sure we do—and are always sorry for it. Thou should have brought Martha up here and sent her mother to London by herself."

"Jane would not go without her."

"I'm astonished at thee! I am astonished at thee, John Hatton!"

"I did not want her to go. I said all I could to prevent it."

Digitized by Google

"That was not enough. Thou should not have permitted her to go."

"Jane thought the change would do her good."

"Late hours, late dinners, lights, and noise, and crowded streets, and air that hes been breathed by hundreds and thousands before it reaches the poor child, and——"

"Nay, mother, that's enough. Count up no more dangers. I am miserable as it is. How goes all with you?"

"Why, John, it goes and goes, and I hardly know where it goes or how it goes, and the mischief of it all is this—some are getting so used to the Government feeding and clothing them that they'll think it a hardship when they hev to feed and clothe themselves."

"Not they, or else they are not men of this countryside. How is Harry? I heard a queer story about him and others yesterday."

"Queer it might be, but it was queer in a good way if it is set against Harry. What did you hear?"

"That Harry had trained a quartette of singers and that they had given two concerts in Harrowgate and three in Scarborough and Halifax, and come back with nearly five hundred pounds for the starving mill-hands in Hatton District."

"That is so—and I'm thankful to say it! People were glad to give. Many were not satisfied with buying tickets; they added a few pounds or shillings

Digitized by Google

as they could spare them. Lord Thirsk went with the company as finance manager. People like a lord at the head of anything, and Thirsk is Yorkshire, well known and trusted."

"No more known and trusted than is Hatton. I think Harry might have asked me. It is a pity they did not think of this plan earlier."

"There may be time enough for the plan to wear itself out yet."

"No. We shall have peace and cotton in three months."

"However can thou say a thing like that?"

"Because I know it."

Then she looked steadily at him. He smiled confidently back, and no further doubt troubled her. "I believe thee, John," she said, "and I shall act accordingly."

"You may safely do so, mother. How is Lucy?"

"Quite well, and the new baby is the finest little fellow I ever saw. Harry says they are going to call him John. Harry is very fond of thee."

"To be sure he is and I am fond of him. I wonder how they manage for cash? Do you think they need it? Have they asked you for any?"

"Not a farthing. Lucy makes the income meet the outgo. The farm feeds the family and Harry earns more than a little out of the music and song God put into him."

"A deal depends on a man's wife, mother."

"Everything depends on her. A man must ask

Digitized by Google

his wife whether he is to do well with his life or make a failure of it. What wilt thou do with thyself while Jane is in London?"

"I am going to stay with you mostly, mother. There will be painters and paperers and cleaners in my home and a lot of dirt and confusion."

"Where is thy economy now, John?"

"When God turns again and blesses Hatton, He will come with both hands full. The mill is in beautiful order, ready for work at any moment. I will make clean and fair my dwelling; then a blessing may light on both places."

It was in this spirit he worked and as the days lengthened his hopes and prospects strengthened and there was soon so much to do that he could not afford the time for uncalled anxiety. He was quickly set at rest about his wife and daughter. Jane wrote that they had received a most affectionate welcome and that Martha had conquered her uncle and aunt's household.

Uncle is not happy, if Martha is out of sight [she wrote] and Aunt is always planning some new pleasure for her. And, John, Uncle is never tired of praising your pluck and humanity. He says he wishes the Almighty had given him such an opportunity; he thinks he would have done just as you have done. It was a little strange that Uncle met a great Manchester banker the other day, and while they were talking of the trouble, now so nearly over, this man said, "Gentlemen, a great many of us have done well, but there is a cotton-spinner in the Yorkshire wolds that has ex-

Digitized by Google

celled us all—one John Hatton. He mortgaged and sold all he had and kept his looms going till the war was practically over. His people have not been idle two months. What do you think of that?"

Some man answered, he did not think it was extraordinary, for John Hatton of Hatton-Elmete was of the finest blood in England. He could not help doing the grand thing if it was there to be done. And then another man took it up and said your blood and family had nothing to do with your conduct. Many poor spinners would have done as you did, if they had been your equals in money. Then the first speaker answered, "We can do without any of your 'equality' talk, Sam Thorpe. What the cream is, the cheese is. Chut! Where's your equality now?" Uncle told me much more but that is enough of praise for you, at once. Martha and I are very happy, and if all the news we hear is true, I expect you to be living by the factory bell when we get home. Dear, good John, we love you and think of you and talk of you all the day long.

JANE.

Jane's letters came constantly and they gave to this period of getting ready for work again a sense of great elation. If a man only passed John on the hill or in the corridors of the mill during these days, he caught spirit and energy and hope from his up-head and happy face and firm step. At the beginning of May the poor women had commenced with woeful hearts to clean their denuded houses, and make them as homelike as they could; and before May was half over, peace was won and there

Digitized by Google

were hundreds of cotton ships upon the Atlantic.

John's finished goods were all now in Manchester warehouses, and Greenwood was watching the arrival of cotton and its prices in Liverpool. John had very little money—none in fact that he could use for cotton, but he confidently expected it, though ignorant of any certain cause for expectation.

As he was eating dinner with his mother one day, she said, "Whatever have you sent Greenwood to Liverpool for?"

"To buy any cotton he can."

"But you have no money."

"Simpson and Hager paid me at once for the calicoes I sent them. I shall be getting money every day now."

"Enough?"

"I shall have enough—some way or other—no fear."

"I'll tell you what, John. I can lend you twenty thousand pounds. I'll be glad to do it."

"O mother! Mother! That will be very salvation to me. How good you are! How good you are!" and there was a tone in John's voice that was perhaps entirely fresh and new. It went straight to his mother's heart, and she continued, "I'll give you a check in the morning, John. You are varry, varry welcome, my dear lad."

"How can you spare me so much?"

"Well, I've been saving a bit here and there and now and then for thirty years, and with interest

Digitized by Google

coming and coming, a little soon counts up. Why, John, I must have been saving for this very strait all these years. Now, the silent money will talk and the idle money roll here and there, making more. That is what money is cut round for—I expect."

"Mother, this is one of the happiest hours in my life. I was carrying a big burden of anxiety."

"Thou need not have carried it an hour; thou might hev known that God and thy mother would be sufficient."

The next morning John went down the hill with a check for twenty thousand pounds in his pocket and a prayer of rest in his heart and a bubbling song on his lips. And all my readers must have noticed that good fortune as well as misfortune has a way of coming in company. There is a tendency in both to pour if they rain, and that day John had another large remittance from a Manchester house and the second mail brought him a letter which was as great a surprise as his mother's loan. It was from Lord Harlow and read as follows:

JOHN HATTON, MY GOOD FRIEND,

I must write you about three things that call for recognition from me. The first is that I am forever your debtor for the fresh delightful company of your little daughter. I have become a new man in her company. She has lifted a great burden from my heart and taught me many things. In my case it has been out of the mouths of babes I have heard wisdom. My second reason for gratitude to you is the

Digitized by Google

noble and humane manner in which you have taken the loss and privations this war entailed. The name of Hatton has been thrice honored by your bearing of it and I count my niece the most fortunate of women to be your wife. She and Martha have in a large measure helped to console me for the loss of my dear son. The third call for recognition is, that I owe you some tangible proof of my gratitude. Now I have a little money lying idle or nearly so, and if you can spend it in buying cotton, I do not know of any better use it can be put to. I am sending in this a check on Coutts' Bank for ten thousand pounds. If it will help you a little, you will do me a great favor by setting poor men and women to work with it. I heard dear little Martha reading her Bible lesson to her mother this morning. It was about the man who folded his talent in a napkin and did nothing with it. Take my offer, John, and help me to put my money to use, so that the Master may receive His own with usury, when he calls for it.

Yours in heart and soul,

HARLOW.

John answered this letter in person. He ran down to London by a night train and spent a day with Jane and Martha and his uncle and aunt. It was such a happy day that it would hardly have been possible to have duplicated it, and John was wise to carry it back to Hatton untouched by thought or word, by look or act which could in any way shadow its perfection. He had longed to take his wife and child back to Hatton with him, but Lady Trelawney was to give a children's May garden-

Digitized by Google

party on the eighteenth of May and Martha had been chosen queen of the May, and when her father saw her in the dress prepared for the occasion and witnessed her enthusiasm about the ceremony and the crowning of herself queen, he put down all his personal desires and gave a ready consent to her stay in London until the pageant was over. Then Jane dressed her in the lace and satin of her coronation robe, with its spangled train of tulle, put on her bright brown hair the little crown of shining gilt and mock jewels, put in her hand the childish scepter and brought her into the drawing-room and bade all make obeisance to her. And the child played her part with such a sweet and noble seriousness that everyone present wondered at her dignity and grace, and John's eyes were full as his heart and the words were yet unknown to human tongues that could express his deep love and emotion. Perhaps Lord Harlow made the best and truest of commentaries when he said,

"My dear friends, let us be thankful that we have yet hearts so childlike as to be capable of enjoying this simple pleasure; for we are told that unless we become as little children, we are not fit for the kingdom of heaven."

The next day soon after noon John was in his factory, but the image of his child still lived in his eyes. His vision was everywhere obstructed by looms and belts and swirling bands, but in front of them there was a silvery light and in its soft

Digitized by Google

glow he saw—he saw clearly—the image of the lovely May Queen in her glimmering dress of shining white with the little gilt crown on her long brown hair. Nor could he dismiss this phantom until he went up to Hatton Hall and described her fairy Majesty to his mother.

"And when are they coming home, John?" asked Mrs. Hatton. "Jane's house is as fine as if it was new and Martha's governess is wearying for her. Martha ought to be at her lessons now. Her holiday is over by all rights."

"The festival will be on the twenty-eighth, and they will come on the thirtieth if the weather be fine."

"What has the weather to do with it?"

"Well, Jane does not like to travel in wet weather. It drabbles her skirts and depresses her spirits—always."

"Dear me! It is a pity she can't order the weather she prefers. I was taught when a year or two younger than Martha six lines that my mother bid me remember as long as I lived. I have not forgot to mind them yet."

"Why didn't you teach them to me?"

"You never feared rain—quite the other way."

"Tell them to me now, mother. It is your duty, you know," and John laughed and bent forward and took in his large brown hand the plump, small, white one she put out to meet his.

"Well then, listen John, and see thou mind them:

Digitized by Google

"The rain has spoiled the farmer's day,
Shall weather put my work away?
Thereby are two days lost.
Nature shall mind her own affairs,
I will attend my proper cares,
In rain or sun or frost."

And the days went busily forward and John though he counted off day by day was happy. Every loom he had was busy overtime. His manufactured goods, woven in such stress and sorrow, were selling well, his cotton sheds were filling rapidly. Men and women were beginning to sing at their work again, for as one result of the day John spent with Harlow, his lordship had opened a plain, good, and very cheap furniture store, where the workers in cotton factories could renew on easy installments the furniture they had sold for a mouthful of bread. It was known only as "The Hatton Furniture Store" and John Hatton, while denying any share in its business, stood as guarantee for its honesty, and no one was afraid to open an account there. It really seemed as if Hatton village had never before been so busy, so hopeful, and so full of life. The factory bell had never sounded so cheerful. The various societies and civic brotherhood meetings never had been so crowded and so cordial. Old quarrels and grudges had died out and had been forgotten forever while men and women broke their last crust of bread together or perhaps clemmed themselves to

Digitized by Google

help feed the children of the very man that had wronged them. Consequent on these pleasant surroundings, Hatton Chapel was crowded, the singing-pew held the finest voices in the countryside, and there was such a renewal of religious interest that Greenwood chose the most jubilant hymn tunes he could find in all Methodist Psalmody.

Then suddenly in spite of all these pleasant happenings strange misgivings began to mix with John's days and cross and darken his hours of rest. Every morning he got his London letter, always full of love and satisfactions, yet uncalled-for and very unlikely apprehensions came into his thoughts and had power to shake his soul as they passed. He was angry at himself. He called himself ungrateful to God who had so wonderfully helped him. He prayed earnestly for a thankful, joyful spirit, and he assumed the virtue of cheerfulness though he was far from feeling it. But he said nothing of this delusive temper to his mother. He was in reality ashamed of his depression, for he knew

> Love that is true must hush itself,
> Nor pain by its useless cry;
> For the young don't care, and the old must bear,
> And Time goes by—goes by.

One morning John said to his mother, "Today Martha is queen of the May. Tomorrow they will pack, and do their last shopping and on Friday after-

Digitized by Google

noon they promise to be home. The maids and men will be all in their places by tonight, and I think Jane will be pleased with the changes I have made."

"She ought to be, but ought often stands for nothing. It cost thee a goodish bit when thou hedn't much to count on."

"Not so much, mother—some paint and paper and yards of creton."

"And new white curtains 'upstairs and downstairs and in my lady's chamber.' Add to that men's and women's wage; and add to that, the love that could neither be bought nor sold."

"She is worth it all many times over."

"Happen she may be. Her aunt has had a heart-breaking lesson. She may say a few words to unsay words that she never should have spoken."

"I shall be thinking of Martha all day. I hope she will keep her confidence."

"What art thou talking about? Martha will do herself no injustice. It isn't likely. What is the matter with thee, John? Thou art as down-hearted as if all had gone wrong instead of right. O thou of little faith!"

"I know and I am sorry and ashamed, mother."

The next morning John had a charming letter from Jane. Martha had done wonderfully. She had played her part to perfection and there were only exclamations of delight at the airy, fairy cleverness of her conceptions of mimic royalty. Jane said the illustrated papers had all taken Martha's pic-

Digitized by Google

ture, and in fact the May Day Dream had been an unqualified, delightful success. "And the praise is all given to Martha, John. I shall have her likeness taken today as she appeared surrounded by her ladies. We shall surely see you at home on Friday."

John was so immensely proud of this news, that he went up the hill earlier than usual in order to give it to his mother. And her attitude disappointed him. She was singularly indifferent, he thought, and answered his excited narrative by a fervent wish that they "were safely back at Hatton." He wondered a little but let the circumstance pass. "She has been worried about some household misdoing," he thought, and he tried during their dinner together to lead her back to her usual homely, frank cheerfulness. He only very partially succeeded, so he lit a cigar and lay down on the sofa to smoke it. And as his mother knit she lifted her eyes occasionally and they were full of anxious pity. She knew not *why,* and yet in her soul there was a dark, swelling sorrow which would not for any adjuration of Scripture nor any imploration of prayer, be stilled.

"I wonder what it is," she whispered. "I wonder if Jane——" then there was a violent knocking at the front door, and she started to her feet, uttering as she did so the word, *"Now!"* She knew instinctively, whatever the trouble was, it was standing at her threshold, and she took a candle in her hand and went to meet it face to face. It was a stranger on

Digitized by Google

a big horse with a telegram. He offered it to Mrs. Hatton, but John had quickly followed his mother and he took it from her and read its appalling message:

Come quickly! Martha is very, very ill!

A dark, heavy cloud took possession of both hearts, but John said only, "Come with me, mother." "No," she answered, "this is Jane's opportunity. I must not interfere with it. I shall be with you, dear John, though you may not see. My kiss and blessing to the little one. God help her! Hurry, John! I will have your horse at the door in ten minutes."

In that long, dark, hurrying ride to London, he suddenly remembered that for two days he had been haunted by a waylaying thought of some verses he had read and cut out of a daily paper, and with the remembrance, back they came to his mind, setting themselves to a phantom melody he could hardly refrain himself from softly singing,

"Many waters go softly dreaming
On to the sea,
But the river of Death floweth softest,
By tower and tree.

"No rush of the mournful waters
Breaks on the ear,
To tell us when Life is strongest,
That Death flows near.

Digitized by Google

"But through throbbing hearts of cities
In the heat of the day,
The cool, dark River passeth
On its silent way.

"This is the River that follows
Wherever we go,
No sand so dry and thirsty,
But these strange waters flow.

Many waters go softly dreaming
On to the sea,
But the river of Death flows softest
To Thee and me.

And the Lord's voice on the waters
Lingereth sweet,
He that is washed needest only
To wash his feet."

Digitized by Google

CHAPTER XIII

THE LOVE THAT NEVER FAILS

Go in peace, soul beautiful and blest!

Yet high above the limits of our seeing,
And folded far within the inmost heart,
And deep below the deeps of conscious being,
Thy splendor shineth! There O God! Thou art.

When John reached London it was in the gray misty dawning. The streets were nearly deserted, and an air of melancholy hung over the long rows of low dwellings. At Harlow House he saw at once that every window was shrouded, and he turned heartsick with the fear that he was too late. A porter, whose eyes were red with weeping, admitted him, and there was an intolerable smell of drugs, the odor of which he recollected all the days of his future life.

"She is still alive, sir—but very ill."

John could not answer, but his look was so urgent and so miserable the man divined the hurry of heart and spirit that he was possessed by and without another word led him to the room where the child lay dying. The struggle was nearly over and

Digitized by Google

John was spared the awful hours of slow strangulation which had already done their work. She was not insensible. She held tight the hand of her mother, kneeling by her side, and gazed at John with eyes wearing a new, deep look as if a veil had been rent and she with open face saw things sweet and wonderful. Her pale, mute mouth smiled faintly and she tried to stretch out her arms to him. There she lay, a smitten child, fallen after a bewildering struggle with a merciless foe. John with a breaking heart lifted her in his arms and carried her gently to-and-fro. The change and motion relieved her a little and what words of comfort and love he said in that last communion only God knows. But though he held her close in his strong arms, she found a way to pass from him to God. Quivering all over like a wounded bird, she gave John her last smile, and was not, for God took her. The bud had opened to set free the rose—the breathing miracle into silence passed. Weeping passionately, his tears washed her face. He was in an agony of piteous feeling in which there was quite unconsciously a strain of resentment.

"She is gone!" he cried, and the two physicians present bowed their heads. Then Jane rose and took the body from the distracted father's arms. She was white and worn out with suffering and watching, but she would allow no one to make the child's last toilet but herself. For this ceremony she needed no lace or satin, no gilt or mock jewelry.

Digitized by Google

She washed the little form free of all earth's stain, combed loose the bright brown hair, matted with the sweat of suffering, and dressed her for the last—the last time, in one of the pretty white linen nightgowns she had made for her darling but a few weeks previously.

Oh, who dare inquire what passed in Jane's soul during that hour? The God who wrote the child's name in His book before she was born, He only knew. Of all that suffered in Martha's loss, Jane suffered incredibly more than any other. She fell prostrate on the floor at the feet of the Merciful Father when this duty was done—prostrate and speechless. Prayer was beyond her power. She was dumb. God had done it and she deserved it. She heard nothing John said to her. All that long, long day she sat by her dead child, until in the darkening twilight some men came into the room on tiptoe. They had a small white coffin in their care, and placed it on a table near the bed. Then Jane stood up and if an unhappy soul had risen from the grave, it could not have shocked them more. She stood erect and looked at them. Her tall form, in its crushed white gown, her deathly white face, her black eyes gleaming with the lurid light of despair, her pale quivering lips, her air of hopeless grief, shocked even these men, used to the daily sight of real or pretended mourners. With a motion of her hand she prevented them coming closer to the dead child, and then by an imperative utterance of the

Digitized by Google

word, *"Go,"* sent them from the room. With her own hand she laid Martha in her last bed and disposed its one garment about the rigid little limbs. She neither spoke nor wept for Ah! in her sad soul she knew that never day or night or man or God could bring her child back to her. And she remembered that once she had said in an evil moment that this dear, dead child was "one too many." Would God ever forgive her?

By a late train that night they left for Hatton Hall, reaching the village about the time for the mill to open. No bell summoned its hands to cheerful work. They were standing at various points, and when the small white coffin went up the hill, they silently followed, softly singing. At the great gates the weeping grandmother received them.

For one day the living and the dead dwelt together in hushed and sorrowful mourning, nor did a word of comfort come to any soul. The weight of that grief which hung like lead upon the rooms, the stairs, the galleries where her step had lately been so light, was also on every heart; and although we ought to be diviner for our dead, the strength of this condition was not as yet realized. John had shut himself in his room, and the grandmother went about her household duties silently weeping and trying to put down the angry thoughts which would arise whenever she remembered how stubbornly her daughter-in-law had refused to leave Martha with her, and make her trip to London alone. She knew

Digitized by Google

it was "well with the child," but Oh the bitter strength of regrets that strain and sicken,

Yearning for love that the veil of Death endears.

Jane sat silent, tearless, almost motionless beside her dead daughter. Now and then John came and tried to comfort the wretched woman, but in her deepest grief, there was a tender motherly strain which he had not thought of and knew not how to answer. "Her little feet! Her little feet, John! I never let them wander alone or stray even in Hatton streets without a helper and guide. O John, what hand will lead them upward and back to God? Those little feet!"

"Her angel would be with her and she would know the way through the constellations. Together they would pass swift as thought from earth to heaven. Martha loved God. They who love God will find their way back to Him, dear Jane."

The next day there was no factory bell. Nearly the whole village was massed in Hatton churchyard, and towards sunset the crowd made a little lane for the small white coffin to the open grave waiting for it. None of the women of the family were present. They had made their parting in the familiar room that seemed, even at that distracting hour, full of Martha's dear presence. But Jane, sitting afterwards at its open window, heard the soft singing of those who went to the grave mouth with the child,

Digitized by Google

and when a little later John and Harry returned together, she knew that *all had been.*

She did not go to meet them, but John came to her. "Let me help you, dear one," he said tenderly. "One is here who will give you comfort."

"None can comfort me. Who is here?"

"The new curate. He said words at the graveside I shall never forget. He filled them with such glory that I could not help taking comfort."

"O John, what did he say?"

"After the service was over, and the people dispersing, he stood talking to Harry and myself, and then he walked up the hill with us. I asked him for your sake."

"I will come down in half an hour, John."

"Then I will come and help you."

And in half an hour this craver after some hope and comfort went down, and then John renewed the conversation which was on the apparent cruelty of children being born to live a short time and then leave Earth by the inscrutable gate of Death.

"It seems to be so needless, so useless," said Jane.

"Not so," the curate answered. "Let me repeat two verses of an ancient Syrian hymn, written A. D. 90, and you will learn what the earliest Fathers of the Church thought of the death of little children.

"The Just One saw that iniquity increased on earth,
And that sin had dominion over all men,

Digitized by Google

And He sent His Messengers, and removed
A multitude of fair little ones,
And called them to the pavilion of happiness.

"Like lilies taken from the wilderness,
Children are planted in Paradise;
And like pearls in diadems,
Children are inserted in the Kingdom;
And without ceasing, shall hymn forth his praise."

"Will you give me a copy of those verses?" asked Jane with great emotion.

"I will. You see a little clearer now?"

"Yes."

"And the glory and the safety for the child? Do you understand?"

"I think I do."

"Then give thanks and not tears because the King desired your child, for this message came forth from Him in whom we live and move and have our being: 'Come up hither, and dwell in the House of the Lord forever. The days of thy life have been sufficient. The bands of suffering are loosed. Thy Redeemer hath brought thee a release.' So she went forth unto her Maker. She attained unto the beginning of Peace. She departed to the habitations of just men made perfect, to the communion of saints, to the life everlasting."

In such conversation the evening passed and all present were somewhat comforted, yet it was only alleviation; for comfort to be lasting, must be in a

Digitized by Google

great measure self-evolved, must spring from our own convictions, our own assurance and sense of absolute love and justice.

However, every sorrow has its horizon and none are illimitable. The factory bell rang clearly the next morning, and the powerful call of duty made John answer it. God had given, and God had taken his only child, but the children of hundreds of families looked to the factory for their daily bread. Yea, and he did not forget the contract with God and his father which bound him to the poor and needy and which any neglect of business might imperil. He lifted his work willingly and cheerfully, for work is the oldest gospel God gave to man. It is good tidings that never fail. It is the surest earthly balm for every grief and whatever John Hatton was in his home life and in his secret hours, he was diligent in business, serving God with a fervent, cheerful spirit. In the mill he never named his loss but once, and that was on the morning of his return to business. Greenwood then made some remark about the dead child, and John answered,

"I am very lonely, Greenwood. This world seems empty without her. Why was she taken away from it?"

"Perhaps she was wanted in some other world, sir."

John lifted a startled face to the speaker, and the man added with an air of happy triumph, as he walked away,

Digitized by Google

"A far better world, sir."

For a moment John rested his head on his hand, then he lifted his face and with level brows fronted the grief he must learn to bear.

Jane's sorrow was a far more severe and constant one. Martha had been part of all her employments. She could do nothing and go nowhere, but the act and the place were steeped in memories of the child. All her work, all her way, all her thoughts, began and ended with Martha. She fell into a dangerous condition of self-immolation. She complained that no one cared for her, that her suffering was uniquely great, and that she alone was the only soul who remembered the dead and loved them.

Mrs. Stephen came from her retreat in Hatton Hall one day in order to combat this illusion.

"Three mothers living in Hatton village hev buried children this week, Jane," she said. "Two of them went back to the mill this morning."

"I think it was very wicked of them."

"They *hed* to go back. They had living children to work for. When the living cling to you, then you must put the dead aside for the living. God cares for the dead and they hev all they want in His care. If you feel that you must fret youself useless to either living or dead, try the living. They'll mostly give you every reason for fretting."

"John has quite forgotten poor little Martha."

"He's done nothing of that sort, but I think thou

Digitized by Google

hes forgotten John, poor fellow! I'm sorry for John, I am that!"

"You have no cause to say such things, mother, and I will not listen to them. John has become wrapped up in that dreadful mill, and when he comes home at night, he will not talk of Martha."

"I am glad he won't and thou ought to be glad too. How can any man work his brains all day in noise and worry and confusion and then come home and fret his heart out all night about a child that is in Heavenly keeping and a wife that doesn't know what is good either for herself or anybody else. Listen to me! I am going to give thee a grain of solid truthful sense. The best man in the world will cease giving sympathy when he sees that it does no good and that he must give it over and over every day. I wonder John gave it as long as he did! I do that. If I was thee, I would try to forget myself a bit. I would let the sunshine into these beautiful rooms. If thou doesn't, the moths will eat up thy fine carpets and cushions, and thou will become one of those chronic, disagreeable invalids that nobody on earth—and I wouldn't wonder if nobody in heaven either—cares a button for."

Jane defended herself with an equal sincerity, and a good many truths were made clear to her that had only hitherto been like a restless movement of her consciousness. In fact the Lady of Hatton Hall left her daughter-in-law penetrated with a new sense of

Digitized by Google

her position. Nor was this sense at all lightened or brightened by her parting remarks.

"I am thy true friend, Jane, that is something better than thy mother-in-law. I want to see thee and John happy, and I assure thee it will be easy now to take one step thou must never take if thou wants another happy hour. John is Yorkshire, flesh and bone, heart and soul, and thou ought to know that Yorkshiremen take no back steps. If John's love wanes, though it be ever so little, it has waned for thee to the end of thy life. Thou can never win it back. *Never!* So, I advise thee to mind thy ways, and thy words."

"Thank you, mother. I know you speak to me out of a sincere heart."

"To be sure I do. And out of a kind heart also. *Why-a!* When John said to me, 'Mother, I love Jane Harlow,' I answered, 'Thou art right to love her. She is a fit and proper wife for thee,' and I made up my mind to love thee, too—faults included."

"Then love me now, mother. John minds your lightest word. Tell him to be patient with me."

"I will—but thou must do thy best to even things. Thou must be more interested in John. Martha is with God. If she hed lived, thou would varry soon be sending her off to some unlovelike, polite boarding-school, and a few years later thou would make a grand feast, and deck her in satin and lace and jewels and give her as a sacrifice to some man thou

Digitized by Google

knew little about—just as the old pagans used to dress up the young heifers with flowers and ribbons before they offered them in blood and flame to Jupiter or the like of him. Martha was God's child and He took her, and I must say, thou gave her up to Him in a varry grudging way."

"Mother, I am going to do better. Forgive me."

"Nay, my dear lass, seek thou God's forgiveness and all the rest will come easy. It is against Him, and Him only, thou hast sinned; but He is long-suffering, plenteous in mercy, and ready to forgive." And then these two women, who had scarcely spoken for years, kissed each other and were true friends ever after. So good are the faithful words of those who dare to speak the truth in love and wisdom.

As it generally happens, however, things were all unfavorable to Jane's resolve. John had been impeded all day by inefficient or careless services; even Greenwood had misunderstood an order and made an impossible appointment which had only been canceled with offense and inconvenience. The whole day indeed had worked itself away to cross purpose, and John came home weary with the aching brows that annoyance and worry touch with a peculiar depressing neuralgia. It need not be described; there are very few who are not familiar with its exhausting, melancholy dejection.

John did his best to meet his wife's more cheerful mood, but the strongest men are often very poor bearers of physical pain. Jane would have suffered

Digitized by Google

—and did often suffer—the same distress with far less complaint. Women, too, soon learn to alleviate such a cruel sensation, but John had a strong natural repugnance for drugs and liniments, and it was only when he was weary of Jane's entreaties that he submitted to a merciful medication which ended in a restorative sleep.

This incident did not discourage Jane in her new resolve. She told herself at once that the first steps on a good or wise road were sure to be both difficult and painful; and in the morning John's cheerful, grateful words and his brave sunny face repaid her fully for the oblivion to which she had consigned her own trials and the subjection she had enforced upon her own personality.

This was the new battle-ground on which she now stood, and at first John hardly comprehended the hard, self-denying conflict she was waging. One day he was peculiarly struck with an act of self-denial which also involved for Jane a slight humiliation, that he could not but wonder at her submission. He looked at her in astonishment and he did not know whether he admired her self-control and generosity or not. The circumstance puzzled and troubled him. That afternoon he had to go to Yoden to see his brother, and he came home by way of Hatton Hall.

As he anticipated, he found his mother pleasantly enjoying her cup of afternoon tea, and she rose with a cry of love to welcome him.

Digitized by Google

"I was thinking of thee, John, and then I heard thy footsteps. I hev the best pot of tea in Yorkshire at my right hand; I'm sure thou wilt hev a cup."

"To be sure I will. It is one of the things I came for, and I want to talk to you half an hour."

"Say all that is in thy heart, and there's nothing helps talk, like a cup of good tea. Whatever does thou want to talk to me about?"

"I want to talk to you about Jane."

"Well then, be careful what thou says. No man's mother is a fair counselor about his wife. They will both say more than they ought to say, especially if she isn't present to explain; and when they don't fully understand, how can they advise?"

"You could not be unjust to anyone, mother?"

"Well, then?"

"She is so much better than she has ever been since the child went away."

"She is doing her best. Thou must help her with all thy heart and soul."

"All her love for me seems to have come back."

"It never left thee for a moment."

"But for weeks and months she has not seemed to care for anything but her memory of Martha."

"That is the way men's big unsuspecting feet go blundering and crushing through a woman's heart. In the first place, she was overwhelmed with grief at Martha's sudden death and at her own apparent instrumentality in it."

Digitized by Google

"I loved Martha as well, perhaps better, than Jane."

"Not thou! Thou never felt one thrill of a mother's love. Jane would have died twice over to save her child. Thou said with all the bitterness of death in thy soul, 'God's will be done.'"

"We will let that pass. Why has her grief been so long-continued?"

"Thou *hed* to put thine aside. A thousand voices called on thee for daily bread. Thou did not dare to indulge thy private sorrow at the risk of neglecting the work God had given thee to do. Jane had nothing to interest her. Her house was so well arranged it hardly needed oversight. The charities that had occupied her heart and her hands were ended and closed. In every room in your house, in every avenue of your garden and park Martha had left her image. Many hours every day you were in a total change of scene and saw a constant variety of men and women. Jane told me that she saw Martha in every room. She saw and heard her running up and down stairs. She saw her at her side, she saw her sleeping and dreaming. Poor mother! Poor sorrowful Jane! It would be hard to be kind enough and patient enough with her."

"Do you think she will always be in this sad condition?"

"Whatever can thou mean? God has appointed Time to console all loss and all grief. Martha will go further and further away as the days wear on

Digitized by Google

and Jane will forget—we all do—we all *hev* to forget."

"Some die of grief."

"Not they. They may induce some disease, to which they are disposed by inordinate and sinful sorrow—and die of that—no one dies of grief, or grief would be our most common cause of death. I think Jane will come out of the Valley of the Shadow a finer and better woman—she was always of a very superior kind."

"Mother, you allude to something that troubles me. I have seen Jane bear and do things lately that a year ago she would have indignantly refused to tolerate. Is not this a decadence in her superior nature?"

"Thou art speaking too fine for my understanding. If thou means by 'decadence' that Jane is growing worse instead of better, then thou art far wrong—and if it were that way, I would not wonder if some of the blame—maybe the main part of it—isn't thy fault. Men don't understand women. How can they?"

"Why not?"

"Well, if the Bible is correct, women were made after men. They were the Almighty's improvement on his first effort. There's very few men that I know—or have ever known—that have yet learned to model themselves after the improvement. It's easier for them to manifest the old Adam, and so they go on living and dying and living and dying and

Digitized by Google

remain only men and never learn to understand a woman."

John laughed and asked, "Have you ever known an improved man, mother?"

"Now and then, John, I have come across one. There was your father, for instance, he knew a woman's heart as well as he knew a loom or a sample of cotton, and there's your brother Harry who is just as willing and helpful as his wife Lucy, and I shall not be far wrong, if I say the best improvement I have seen on the original Adam is a man called John Hatton. He is nearly good enough for any woman."

Again John laughed as he answered, "Well, dear mother, this is as far as we need to go. Tell me in plain Yorkshire what you mean by it."

"I mean, John, that in your heart you are hardly judging Jane fairly. I notice in you, as well as in the general run of husbands, that if they hev to suffer at all, they tell themselves that it is their wife's fault, and they manage to believe it. It's queer but then it's a man's way."

"You think I should be kinder to Jane?"

"Thou art kind enough in a way. A mother might nurse her baby as often as it needed nursing, but if she never petted it and kissed it, never gave it smiles and little hugs and simple foolish baby talk, it would be a badly nursed and a very much robbed child. Do you understand?"

"You think I ought to give Jane more petting?"

Digitized by Google

Mrs. Hatton smiled and nodded. "She calls it *sympathy,* John, but that is what she means. Hev a little patience, my dear lad. Listen! There is a grand wife and a grand mother in Jane Hatton. If you do not develop them, I, your mother, will say, 'somehow it is John's fault.' "

Now life will always be to a large extent what we make it. Jane was trying with all her power to make her life lovable and fair, and the beginning of all good is action, for in this warfare they who would win must struggle. Hitherto, since Martha's death, she had found in nascent, indolent self-pity the choicest of luxuries. Now she had abandoned this position and with courage and resolve was devoting herself to her husband and her house. Unfortunately, there were circumstances in John's special business cares that gave an appearance of Duncan Grey's wooing to all her efforts—when the lassie grew kind, Duncan grew cool. It was truly only an appearance, but Jane was not familiar with changes in Love's atmosphere. John's steadfast character had given her always fair weather.

In reality the long strain of business cares and domestic sorrow had begun to tell even upon John's perfect health and nervous system. Facing absolute ruin in the war years and surrounded by pitiable famine and death, he had kept his cheerful temper, his smiling face, his resolute, confident spirit. Now, he was singularly prosperous. The mill was busy nearly night and day, all his plans and hopes had

Digitized by Google

been perfected; yet he was often either silent or irritable. Jane seldom saw him smile and never heard him sing and she feared that he often shirked her company.

One hot morning at the end of August she had a shock. He had taken his breakfast before she came down and he had left her no note of greeting or explanation. She ran to a window that overlooked the main avenue and she could see him walking slowly towards the principal entrance. Her first instinct was to follow him—to send the house man to delay him—to bring him back by some or any means. Once she could and would have done so, but she did not feel it wise or possible then. What had happened? She went slowly back to her breakfast, but there was a little ball in her throat—she could not swallow—the grief and fear in her heart was surging upward and choking her.

All that her mother-in-law had said came back to her memory. Had John taken that one step away? Would he never take it back to her? She was overwhelmed with a climbing sorrow that would not down. Yet she asked with assumed indifference,

"Was the Master well this morning?"

"It's likely, ma'am. He wasn't complaining. That isn't Master's way."

Then she thought of her own complaining, and was silent.

After breakfast she went through the house and

Digitized by Google

found every room impossible. She flooded them with fresh air and sunshine, but she could not empty them of phantoms and memories and with a little half-uttered cry she put on her hat and went out. Surely in the oak wood she would find the complete solitude she must have. She passed rapidly through the band of ash-trees that shielded the house on the north and was directly in the soft, deep shadow of umbrageous oaks a century old. They whispered among themselves at her coming, they fanned her with a little cool wind from the encircling mountains, and she threw herself gratefully down upon the soft, warm turf at their feet.

Then all the sorrow of the past months overwhelmed her. She wept as if her heart would break and there was a great silence all around which the tinkle of a little brook over its pebbly bed only seemed to intensify. Presently she had no more tears left and she dried her eyes and sat upright and was suddenly aware of a great interior light, pitiless and clear beyond all dayshine. And in it she saw herself with a vision more than mortal. It was an intolerable vision, but during it there was formed in her soul the faculty of prayer.

Out of the depths of her shame and sorrow she called upon God and He heard her. She told Him all her selfishness and sin and urged by some strong spiritual necessity, begged God's forgiveness and help with the conquering prayers that He himself gave her. "Cast me not from Thy Presence," she

Digitized by Google

cried. "Take not Thy holy spirit from me," and then there flashed across her trembling soul the horror and blackness of darkness in which souls "cast from God's presence" must dwell forever. Prostrate in utter helplessness, she cast herself upon the Eternal Father's mercy. If He would forgive her selfish rebellion against the removal of Martha, if He would give her back the joy of the first years of her espousal to her husband, if He would only forgive her, she could do without all the rest—and then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, she knew she was forgiven. An inexpressible glory filled her soul, washed clean of sin. Love beyond words, peace and joy beyond expression, surrounded her. She stood up and lifted her face and hands to heaven and cried out like one in a swoon of triumph,

"Thou hast called me by my name! I am Thine!"

All doubt, all fear, all sorrow, all pain was gone. She knew as by flashlight, her whole duty to her husband and her relatives and friends. She was willing with all her heart to perform it. She went to the little stream and bathed her face and she thought it said as it ran onward, *"Happy woman! Happy woman!"* The trees looked larger and greener, and seemed to stand in a golden glow. The shepherd's rose and the stately foxgloves were more full of color and scent. She heard the fine inner tones of the birds' songs that Heaven only hears;

Digitized by Google

and all nature was glorified and rejoiced with her. She had a new heart and the old cares and sorrows had gone away forever.

Such conversions are among the deepest, real facts in the history of the soul of man. They have occurred in all ages, in all countries, and in all conditions of life, for we know that they are the very truth, as we have seen them translated into action. There is no use attempting to explain by any human reason facts of such majesty and mystery, for how can natural reason explain what is supernatural?

In a rapture of joy Jane walked swiftly home. She was not conscious of her movements, the solid earth might have been a road of some buoyant atmosphere. All the world looked grandly different, and she herself was as one born again. Her servants looked at her in amazement and talked about "the change in Missis," while the work of the household dropped from their hands until old Adam Boothby, the gardener, came in for his dinner.

"She passed me," he said, "as I was gathering berries. She came from the oak wood, and O blind women that you be, couldn't you see she hed been with God? The clear shining of His face was over her. She's in a new world this afternoon, and the angels in heaven are rejoicing over her, and I'm sure every man in Hatton will rejoice with her husband; he's hed a middling bad time with her lately or I'm varry much mistaken."

Then these men and women, who had been pri-

Digitized by Google

vately unstinting in their blame of Missis and her selfish way, held their peace. She had been with God. About that communion they did not dare to comment.

As it neared five o'clock, Jane's maid came into the kitchen with another note of surprise. "Missis hes dressed hersen in white from head to foot," she cried. "She told me to put away her black things out of sight. I doan't know what to think of such ways. It isn't half a year yet since the child died."

"I'd think no wrong if I was thee, Lydia Swale. Thou hesn't any warrant for thinking wrong but what thou gives thysen, and thou be neither judge nor jury," said an old woman, making Devonshire cream.

"In white from top to toe," Lydia continued, "even her belt was of white satin ribbon, and she put a white rose in her hair, too. It caps me. It's a queer dooment."

"Brush the black frocks over thy arm and then go and smarten thysen up a bit. It will be dinner-time before thou hes thy work done."

"Happen it may. I'm not caring and Missis isn't caring, either. She'll never wear these frocks again —she might as well give them to me."

In the meantime Jane was looking at herself in the long cheval mirror. The rapture in her heart was still reflected on her face, and the white clothing transfigured her. "John must see that the great

Digitized by Google

miracle of life has happened to me, that I have really been born again. Oh, how happy he will be!"

With this radiant thought she stepped lightly down to the long avenue by which John always came home. About midway, there was a seat under a large oak-tree and she saw John sitting on it. He was reading a letter when Jane appeared, but when he understood that it really was Jane, he was lost in amazement and the letter fell to the ground.

"John! John!" she cried in a soft, triumphant voice. "O John, do you know what has happened to me?"

"A miracle, my darling! But how?" And he drew her to his side and kissed her. "You are like yourself—you are as lovely as you were in the hour I first saw you."

"John, I went to the oak-wood early this morning. I carried with me all my sins and troubles, and as I thought of them my heart was nearly broken and I wept till I could weep no longer. Then a passionate longing to pray urged me to tell God everything, and He heard me and pitied and forgave me. He called me by name and comforted me, and I was so happy! I knew not whether I was in this world or in Paradise; every green thing was lovelier, every blue thing was bluer, there was a golden glory in my heart and over all the earth, and I knew not that I had walked home till I was there. John, dear John! You understand?"

Digitized by Google

"My darling! You make me as happy as yourself."

"Happy! John, I shall always make you happy now. I shall never grieve or sadden or disappoint you again. Never once again! O my love! O my dear good husband! Love me as only you can love me. Forgive me, John, as God has forgiven me! Make me happy in your love as God has made life glorious to me with His love!"

And for some moments John could not speak. He kissed her rapturously and drew her closer and closer to his side, and he sought her eyes with that promise in his own which she knew instinctively would surround and encompass and adore her with unfailing and undying affection as long as life should last.

In a communion nigh unto heaven they spent the evening together. John had left his letter lying on the ground where he met his white-robed wife. He forgot it, though it was of importance, until he saw it on the ground in the morning. He forgot everything but the miracle that had changed all his water into wine. It seemed as if his house could not contain the joy that had come to it. He threw off all his sadness, as he would have cast away a garment that did not fit him, by a kind of physical movement; and the years in which he had known disappointment and loss of love dropped away from him. For Jane had buried in tenderest words and hopes all the cruel words which had so bitterly wounded

Digitized by Google

and bereaved and impoverished his life. Jane had promised and God was her surety. He had put into her memory a wondrous secret word. She had heard His voice, and it could never again leave her heart;

> And who could murmur or misdoubt,
> When God's great sunshine finds them out?

. . . . . .

Digitized by Google

SEQUENCES

There are few episodes in life which break off finally. Life is now so variable, travel so easy, there are no continuing cities and no lasting interests, and we ask ourselves involuntarily, "What will the sequence be?" When I left Yorkshire, I was too young and too ignorant of the ever-changing film of daily existence to think or to care much about sequences; and the Hattons were a family of the soil; they appeared to be as much a part of it as the mountains and elms, the blue bells and the heather. I never expected to see them again and the absence of this expectation made me neither sorry nor glad.

One day, however, a quarter of a century after the apparent close of my story, I was in St. Andrews, the sacred, solemn-looking old city that is the essence of all the antiquity of Scotland. But it was neither its academic air nor its ecclesiastical forlornness, its famous links nor venerable ruins of cloister and cathedral that attracted me at that time. It was the promise of a sermon by Dean Stanley which detained me on my southward journey. I had heard Dean Stanley once, and naturally I could not but wish to hear him again.

He was to preach in the beautiful little chapel of

Digitized by Google

St. Salvator's College and I went with the crowd that followed the University faculty there. One of the incidents of this walk was seeing an old woman in a large white-linen cap, carrying an umbrella, innocently join the gowned and hooded procession of the University faculty. I was told afterwards that Stanley was greatly delighted at her intrusion. He wore a black silk gown and bands, the Oxford D.D. hood, a broad scarf of what looked like crêpe, and the order of the Bath, and his text was, "Ye have need of patience." The singing was extraordinarily beautiful, beginning with that grand canticle, "Lord of All Power and Might," as he entered the pulpit. His beautiful beaming face and the singular way in which he looked up with closed eyes was very attractive and must be well remembered. But I did not notice it with the interest I might have done, if other faces had not awakened in my memory a still keener interest. For in a pew among those reserved for the professors and officials of the city, I saw one in which there was certainly seated John Hatton and his wife. There were some young men with them, who had a remarkable resemblance to the couple, and I immediately began to speculate on the probabilities which could have brought a Yorkshire spinner to the ecclesiastical capital of Scotland.

After the service was over I found them at the Royal Hotel. Then I began to learn the sequence. The landlord of the Royal introduced it by inform-

Digitized by Google

ing me that Mr. and Mrs. John Hatton were *not* there, but that Sir John Hatton and Lady Hatton *were* staying at the Royal. They were delighted to see me again and for three days I was almost constantly in Lady Hatton's company. During these days I learned in an easy conversational way all that had followed "the peace that God made." No trouble was in its sequence—only that blessing which maketh rich and addeth no sorrow therewith.

"Yes," Lady Hatton answered to my question concerning the youths I had seen in the church with them, "they were my boys. I have four sons. The eldest, called John, is attending to his father's business while my husband takes a little holiday. Stephen is studying law, and George is preparing for the Navy; my youngest boy, Elbert, is still at Rugby."

"And your daughters?" I asked.

She smiled divinely. "Oh!" she replied. "They are such darlings! Alice is married and Jane is married and Clara is staying with her grandmother. She is only sixteen. She is very beautiful and Mrs. Hatton will hardly let her leave the Hall."

"Then Mrs. Hatton is still alive?" I said.

"Yes, indeed, very much so. She will *live* to her last moment, and likely 'pass out of it,' as our people say, busy with heart and head and hands."

"And what of Mrs. Harry?" I asked.

"Ah, she left us some years ago! Just faded away. For nearly two years she knew she was

Digitized by Google

dying, and was preparing her household for her loss, yet joining as best she could in all the careless mirth of her children. But she talked to me of what was approaching and said she often whispered to herself, 'Another hour gone.' Dear Lucy, we all loved her. Her children are doing well, the boys are all in Sir John's employ."

"And Mr. Harry? Does he still sing?"

"Not much since Lucy's death. But he looks after the land, and paints and reads a great deal, and we are all very fond of Harry. His mother must see him every day, and Sir John is nearly as foolish. Harry was born to be loved and everyone loves him. He has gone lately to the Church of England, but Sir John, though a member of Parliament, stands loyally by the Methodist church."

"And you?"

"I go with Sir John in everything. I try to walk in his steps, and so keep middling straight. Sir John lives four square, careless of outward shows. It is years and years since I followed my own way. Sir John's ways are wiser and better. He is always ready for the duty of the hour and never restless as to what will come after it. Is not that a good rule?"

"Are you on your way home now?" I asked.

"Oh, no! We are going as far as the Shetlands. John had a happy holiday there before we were married. He is taking Stephen and George to see the lonely isles."

Digitized by Google

"You have had a very happy life, Lady Hatton?"

"Yes," she answered. "The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places."

"And you have beautiful children."

"Thank God! His blessing and peace came to me from the cradle. One day I found my Bible open at II Esdras, second chapter, and my eyes fell on the fifteenth verse: 'Mother, embrace thy children and bring them up with gladness.' I knew a poor woman who had ten children, and instead of complaining, she was proud and happy because she said God must have thought her a rare good mother to trust her with ten of His sons and daughters."

"I have not seen much of Sir John."

"He is on the yacht with the boys most of the time. They are visiting every day some one or other of the little storied towns of Fife. Sometimes it is black night when they get back to St. Andrews. But they have always had a good time even if it turned stormy. John finds, or makes, good come from every event. Greenwood—you remember Greenwood?"

"Oh, yes!"

"He used to say Sir John Hatton is the full measure of a man. He was very proud of Sir John's title, and never omitted, if it was possible to get it in, the M. P. after it. Greenwood died a year ago as he was sitting in his chair and picking out the hymns

Digitized by Google

to be sung at his funeral. They were all of a joyful character."

So we talked, and of course only the best in everyone came up for discussion, but then in fine healthy natures the best *does* generally come to the top—and this was undoubtedly one reason that conversation on any subject always drifted in some way or other to John Hatton. His faith in God, his love for his fellowmen, his noble charity, his inflexible justice, his domestic virtues, his confidence in himself, and his ready-handed use of all the means at his command—yea, even his beautiful manliness, what were they but the outcome of one thousand years of Christian faith transmitted through a royally religious ancestry?

When a good man is prosperous in all his ways they say in the North "God smiled on him before he was born," and John Hatton gave to this blessing a date beyond limitation, for a little illuminated roll hanging above the desk in his private room bore the following golden-lettered inscription:

> . . . God smiled as He has always smiled,
> Ere suns and moons could wax and wane,
> God thought on me His child.

(1)

THE END

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

Digitized by Google

This book should be returned to the Library on or before the last date stamped below.

A fine is incurred by retaining it beyond the specified time.

Please return promptly.

JAN 7 58 H

Digitized by Google